

# Inspection of a good school: Stow Heath Primary School

Hill Road, Portobello, Willenhall, West Midlands WV13 3TT

---

Inspection dates:

21 to 22 March 2023

## Outcome

Stow Heath Primary School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Stow Heath Primary School is an inclusive school where all pupils are genuinely welcome. Pupils enjoy attending school. Leaders have high expectations of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Their motto, 'Shine like a star', weaves flawlessly into everyday classroom practice. Staff care about the children and know them well. One pupil summed this up, stating, 'Staff sort out issues and recognise when we are upset because they know us well.'

Behaviour throughout the school is calm and settled. Pupils treat each other with respect. Bullying does not worry pupils. They know that leaders will respond to reported incidents and take effective action. Pastoral support and mental health support are strengths of the school. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure.

The headteacher and governing body have recruited an effective new senior leadership team. This team has brought in a number of new strategies, which has begun to improve the quality of education within the school. However, because many of the strategies are new and not fully embedded, inconsistencies have occurred between year groups. As a result, the rate of pupils' achievement is slower in some classes.

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have implemented a well-structured and sequenced curriculum, which is designed to ensure that pupils regularly revisit important learning. Subject-specific content is taught well, and pupils remember more because of this. For example, in history, they talk with confidence about the key facts they have remembered from studying recent topics, such as the Vikings and Anglo Saxons. However, the content that teachers emphasise and assess does not always focus enough on important recurring themes or features of the past. For example, pupils are not fully developing knowledge of concepts like government, empire and monarchy. In addition, some staff

are not yet fully familiar with approaches introduced recently to accelerate pupils' achievement.

Reading is a clear priority within the school. Leaders train and support staff well to teach phonics. Pupils learn the sounds they need to help them read. They practise these sounds by using decodable books which are carefully matched to the sounds they know. Staff regularly check pupils' and children's phonic knowledge. This allows staff to identify those pupils who need additional support. Leaders have chosen high-quality books to read to children regularly. In this way, a love of reading is being promoted.

Routines and expectations start in the early years, which is well organised. Staff work closely together, sharing information about their family groups, to ensure that the curriculum is carefully planned according to the needs of the children. Children learn to play cooperatively and to use equipment safely. Teachers introduce effective strategies to support pupils who struggle to concentrate. As a result, as pupils move through the school, they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Stow Heath is very inclusive. Leaders have created an additional provision to support pupils with SEND. There has recently been a sharp increase in the number of pupils with complex needs entering this provision. Leaders and governors are managing the increased numbers effectively, and they are working with the local authority to increase funding to support more children.

Pupils with SEND do well here. The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) brings expertise and dedication. The needs of pupils with SEND are quickly and accurately identified. Leaders ensure that pupils' needs are understood by staff. They work well with teachers, parents, carers and external professionals to check how well pupils learn. Professionals, including occupational therapists and speech and language experts, provide training for teaching staff. Pupils with SEND do not miss out on any part of their learning. Teachers change or adapt work to enable all pupils to access or record their work successfully.

Leaders have made sure there is a wide range of experiences for all pupils, ensuring no one is left out. Teachers plan trips into the local community to bring the curriculum to life. Pupils enjoy taking on extra responsibilities in school, such as representing others as a member of the school council. Older pupils are responsible role models. On 'wonderful Wednesdays', pupils attend a wide range of clubs, which enables them to develop their wider interests, such as sewing, mindfulness, art and cooking.

Governors know the school well and are ambitious for its future. Leaders and governors think about staff needs when they make decisions about the school. Staff say that leaders consider their workload and well-being. They gave many examples of how leaders have supported them with personal issues. Staff value this support.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture across the school. Leaders provide regular safeguarding training for all staff and ensure that their knowledge is kept up to date. Systems for recruitment are robust. Leaders have ensured that staff are aware of how to raise any concerns, including a low-level concern, about an adult.

Leaders work effectively with external agencies, such as the local authority. Staff work closely with parents to develop trust and to offer early help.

Pupils learn to keep themselves safe. They understand the importance of using the internet and social media with caution.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some staff are not explicit enough about the knowledge they want pupils to learn within the wider curriculum. As a result, pupils do not develop a deep enough understanding of some aspects of the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that teachers are able to identify the key subject disciplinary and conceptual knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember.
- The new leadership team has introduced strategies to accelerate pupils' achievement across the school. Some staff are not yet fully familiar with the intended teaching approaches. Consequently, learning in these classes is improving at a slower rate. Leaders should help staff to develop their knowledge of, and confidence in, the new teaching approaches that are having an impact on pupils' learning.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good on 3 and 4 May 2017.

## **How can I feedback my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104323
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240175
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	491
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Kevin King
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lisa Scoffham
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stowheathprimaryschool.co.uk/">http://www.stowheathprimaryschool.co.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 and 4 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- There have been many changes to the school's leadership and staffing since the last inspection. The current headteacher took up post in June 2021.
- There are more pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans for their SEND than in the average primary school. The majority of pupils with EHC plans have needs related to autism spectrum disorder.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- As part of the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, the deputy headteacher, and the senior leadership team. The inspector also met with the SENDCo and held meetings with teachers.

- The inspector held a hybrid conversation with the chair of governors, three other governors and four members of the governing body online.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work in mathematics.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and met with pupils to talk about safeguarding and what it is like to be a pupil at this school.
- The inspector considered information relating to safeguarding, including the school's single central register of vetting checks on adults working at the school.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey and the views of staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Max Vlahakis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023