

Inspection of a good school: Stonham Aspal Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Street, Stonham Aspal, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 6AF

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 April 2023

Outcome

Stonham Aspal Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this happy, friendly school. They like the fun and interesting learning activities that their teachers plan for them. Pupils feel safe. They understand that bullying is wrong and say it is very rare. They are confident that adults will sort out any disagreements, should they occur.

Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They listen attentively to their teachers. They are respectful of each other when discussing ideas. At break and lunchtime, pupils play happily together. They enjoy using the range of outdoor equipment that leaders have provided.

Everyone understands the school's values. These are woven throughout school life. Pupils contribute well to school life. They take on a range of responsibilities. These include worship leaders, members of the school council and eco-club members. Pupils enjoy the many after-school clubs, trips and enrichment activities available to them. These include a range of sports, drama, music and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) clubs.

Parents shared many positive comments about the school. One who spoke for many commented that 'Stonham Aspal is a lovely school. My children are happy and making good progress. The school is responsive when concerns are raised.'

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

Leaders have ensured that there is a well-planned curriculum in place. Curriculum plans for each subject ensure that pupils build their knowledge and skills over time from the

early years to Year 6. Plans include the language pupils should learn for each subject. This helps them to talk about their learning. In art, for example, pupils used precise vocabulary to explain the techniques they were learning. Teachers check regularly to make sure that pupils have understood new learning and that they can recall previous learning. The use of assessment is not as fully developed in all subjects as it is in mathematics and English. This means that pupils are not always fully aware of how to improve their work in other subjects.

Leaders have prioritised training for staff to ensure they have the expertise to deliver the planned curriculum. Subject leaders check how well the curriculum is being delivered. They provide support to teachers if it is needed. As a result, teachers have good subject knowledge and explain the subjects they teach well. Pupils say that they make learning fun.

Leaders promote a love of reading. A new phonics scheme is improving outcomes in phonics. The school's approach to teaching reading helps pupils build their reading skills over time. Leaders ensure that pupils read books that match the sounds they are taught. This helps early readers to practise the sounds they are learning. Younger pupils quickly apply their reading skills to spelling and writing words in simple sentences. As a result, most pupils rapidly become fluent readers and enjoy reading. Extra sessions are provided to support any pupils who are not keeping up. Classrooms have inviting reading areas, which encourages pupils to read new books. Leaders have chosen a broad range of rich and diverse texts. These underpin the teaching of both reading and writing. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the texts they read. They like the fact that many have a moral to them.

Leaders are quick to identify any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure that appropriate plans are in place to support these pupils. Pupils with SEND receive effective support from well-trained staff to access the same curriculum as their peers. This helps them to make progress from their varied starting points.

Staff implement a consistent and positive approach to managing pupils' behaviour. From the early years, pupils respond well to this approach. They understand the clear routines and expectations underpinning the behaviour policy. As a result, behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.

There is a carefully planned curriculum in place to support pupils' wider development. Pupils learn to become active citizens. For example, they learn how to care for the environment through the eco-club. Pupils fundraise for a range of charities. The democratically elected school council members work with leaders to improve the school. Recently, pupils have been involved in developing a pond area. Pupil worship leaders develop confidence through leading assemblies. The school's vision encourages pupils to believe and achieve. Pupils are kind to each other and accepting of differences. Leaders are aware that pupils need more opportunities to interact with pupils in local schools and to broaden their cultural understanding.

Staff value support from leaders. They appreciate that leaders are considerate of their workload. Governors are skilled and knowledgeable about the school. This enables them to support school development and improvement effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and leaders know pupils and their families very well. This means that they are alert to any changes which could indicate that a pupil may be at risk of harm.

Leaders and governors have ensured that there are robust systems in place to check that pupils are safe. All staff have received appropriate training. They record concerns, however minor, and leaders follow these up in a timely manner. Leaders are proactive and ensure that families receive the right help.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when, for example, crossing the road or working online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers are not consistently using assessment well in all foundation subjects. This means that pupils do not always know how to improve their work in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that pupils receive high-quality feedback from teachers as to how to improve their work, learning and understanding across all subjects.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to enable them to gain a good understanding of diverse cultures. Leaders should implement their plans to further raise pupils' awareness of other cultures and diversify their experiences and understanding.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

How can I feed back 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

Unique reference number	124772
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10255171
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Helena Tiernay
Headteacher	Ben Hemmings
Website	www.stonhamaspal.suffolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since April 2022.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.
- Wraparound care is provided for pupils and is managed by those responsible for governance.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school took place in March 2016. The next section 48 inspection will take place within eight years.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art, to evaluate the quality of education. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, considered curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to

teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. Other aspects of the curriculum were also scrutinised to provide further evidence for the quality of education.

- The inspector observed some pupils read to staff and talked to them about their reading. She also spoke to other pupils about reading.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour across the site. She met with groups of pupils to seek their views of the school. She also spoke to pupils informally in class, around the school and at breaktimes. The inspector also spoke with staff about their workload and well-being and pupils' behaviour.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector scrutinised the single central record and reviewed safeguarding systems. The inspector spoke with leaders, teachers, support staff, members of the governing body, and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding at the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, and subject leader for personal, social and health education. The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair. Additionally, she held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including curriculum plans and school development plans.
- The inspector considered the views of parents. She spoke with parents at the end of the school day. The inspector considered 98 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 92 free-text comments.
- The inspector spoke with staff, to gather their views. She also considered 16 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector spoke with pupils throughout the inspection, to gather their views. There were three responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Joan Beale, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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