

Inspection of a good school: East Stanley School

Chester Road, East Stanley, Stanley, County Durham DH9 0TN

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 September 2023

Outcome

East Stanley School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Mrs Joanne Williams. This school is part of Stanley Learning Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Mark Stewart, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tom Harpe.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff, leaders, governors and the trust share an ambition to give pupils the best education they can. Pupils enjoy coming to school and they achieve well.

Pupils learn about treating others with respect. They know that it is fine to have different individual characteristics and backgrounds and they treat each other kindly. At lunchtimes, pupils play well together and are involved in a range of different activities.

The school has clearly understood routines which help pupils to behave and learn well. Children who are new to Reception have quickly settled into school life. Older pupils already know what their new teachers expect of them and they live up to these expectations. Pupils listen attentively and follow teachers' guidance quickly. They learn in a harmonious environment.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe, such as from strangers or when working and playing online. They are confident to talk to adults in the school if they are worried about something. Pupils are safe and happy in this ambitious school where they are encouraged to learn well.

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

In each subject, the school has set out precisely what pupils should learn. Leaders have thought through what pupils need to learn first in order to develop a more complex understanding over time. This starts in Reception and goes through to the end of Year 6. For example, in physical education (PE), younger pupils are taught about throwing. As

they move into older year groups, pupils build on and hone these skills in order to know how to bowl in cricket.

The school has ensured that teachers have the knowledge and resources to teach each subject well. From the early years onwards, teachers know what to teach and how to teach it. Pupils' positive behaviours mean that learning is rarely disrupted. Consequently, pupils build an increasingly complex body of knowledge over time.

The school works in partnership with parents in determining what support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) need. Teachers and leaders use their knowledge of pupils, and the plans they put in place, to adapt the curriculum and how it is taught to ensure pupils with SEND learn as effectively as possible.

In reading and mathematics, the school has established processes for checking how well pupils learn. The school uses information from this ongoing assessment to determine if individuals need more help. In the wider curriculum, teachers do not check the depth of pupils' understanding as effectively as in core subjects. In addition, the curriculum in wider subjects does not consistently enable pupils working at the highest level to learn as fully as they could. The school is aware of this and is in the early stages of refining its work in these areas.

Following the pandemic, leaders realised that the phonics programme was not meeting the needs of enough pupils. Consequently, the school brought in a new scheme, trained all staff in how to use it and invested heavily in resources to support it. The scheme is now in its second year of use and is working well. Teachers teach phonics in line with their training. They make sure that the books pupils read are aligned with the sounds they know. They check that pupils are keeping up, and, if not, take action to make sure they catch up quickly. Pupils learn to read well and they enjoy reading.

The school and trust provide, and often fund, a range of opportunities for pupils to take part in that they might not otherwise experience, such as trips to the theatre, a computing club and a trust-wide awards ceremony. This year, the school and trust have expanded their offer to include more extra-curricular clubs and a co-ordinated 'passport' of entitlement to different experiences.

The curriculum for personal, social and health education enables pupils to learn about their physical and emotional development, how to stay safe and how to treat others.

The strong team ethos among those who lead and teach in the school is underpinned by the thought that goes into decisions. Leaders make sure that staff are involved in making changes and that their workload is carefully considered. On behalf of the trust, local governors and trust staff know and oversee the work of the school well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment procedures in the wider curriculum do not check the depth of pupils' understanding as well as in subjects such as reading and mathematics. The school should develop its assessment procedures so that the depth of pupils' understanding can be better checked across all subjects.
- In some subject curriculums, the deep knowledge that would enable some pupils to excel in their learning is not clearly mapped out. This means that some pupils do not acquire the extra knowledge which would help them to thrive and become experts for their age. The school should ensure that subject curriculums enable all pupils to learn to their fullest.

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 predecessor school, East Stanley School, to be good in March 2018.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years,

looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148467
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10297535
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tom Harpe
Headteacher	Joanne Williams
Website	www.eaststanleyschool.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has converted to become an academy in the Stanley Learning Partnership multi-academy trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.
- The school runs before- and after-school clubs.
- East Stanley School converted to become an academy school in April 2021. When its predecessor school, East Stanley School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders. He met with representatives of the trust, including the chief executive officer, who is also a trustee, the school improvement director and members of the local governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to a selection of pupils reading to a member of staff.
- The inspector met with the curriculum leaders for computing and history and reviewed curriculum plans for these subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record of recruitment checks, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector spoke with staff and reviewed the responses to Ofsted's survey of their views.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector spoke to a range of pupils and reviewed the responses to Ofsted's survey of their views.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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