

Inspection of Stratford St Mary Primary School

Stratford St Mary, Nr Colchester, Suffolk CO7 6YG

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly, community school. From Reception, they benefit from an interesting and engaging curriculum. Pupils are challenged by the adults to think deeply about important content. Pupils speak animatedly about the topics they have been taught, such as Ancient Egypt. They confidently share their own opinions as well as other people's viewpoints.

Pupils thrive in a warm and welcoming environment. Older pupils get along very well with the younger pupils. They like the responsibility they have for helping them. Pupils are happy and well cared for. They have excellent relationships with the adults. They enjoy helping each other. For example, younger children tie each other's aprons before painting or playing in the water trough.

Throughout the school, pupils behave well. They listen to the instructions that adults give them, and they follow the school rules. The environment is calm. Pupils eat lunch sensibly together and enjoy playtime and lunchtime clubs. Netball is very popular. Pupils like being part of a small school where everyone gets along well. There are good levels of understanding and respect for differences. Older pupils like the formal opportunities they are given to help others, for example as friendship ambassadors.

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

The school has high expectations for what pupils should achieve. It has embedded a curriculum that supports pupils to develop a breadth of knowledge and skills across different subjects. From Reception, there are clear and ambitious plans that outline what pupils will learn.

Adults are skilled at delivering the curriculum to mixed-age classes, making the necessary adaptations where needed. In the main, staff have a strong understanding of how to plan and teach lessons that are suitably ambitious. They are skilled at using a range of teaching strategies to check what pupils know. Staff provide clarification if any pupils are unsure about the learning. Their strong subject knowledge means that they are confident at providing clear explanations to develop pupils' understanding further. This ensures pupils are appropriately supported to do well.

In a small minority of subjects, curriculum plans do not outline in sufficient detail what pupils in mixed-age classes need to know. Therefore, in some subjects, pupils in different year groups are given the same work as each other. This means that the older pupils are not always given enough opportunities to use and apply what they know with as much rigour as they should.

The school has ensured that pupils benefit from effective teaching that helps them learn to read. Adults have appropriate checks in place to see whether pupils are keeping up with the phonics programme. If pupils struggle with the sounds they are

learning, or fall behind their peers, adults intervene. They ensure that pupils get the extra help they need to keep up. This ensures pupils learn to read confidently and fluently.

The school has ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Their needs are accurately identified, and there are clear plans in place that outline to adults how to give pupils with SEND appropriate help. These plans are understood by the staff and followed well. The school closely monitors how well pupils with SEND are doing, either with their work or their emotional needs. The school quickly intervenes if pupils require further help. This ensures that pupils with SEND do well.

In Reception, adults make sure that children experience a varied range of activities that support their development through the curriculum. With adult guidance, children practise counting, writing their names, painting, drawing and creative play. Children enjoy spending time outdoors. They show high levels of concentration in their activities. Adults prioritise children's communication and language development. They are skilled at having conversations with the children that develop their language skills effectively.

Expectations for how pupils should behave are high. Pupils are very polite and considerate. They treat others with kindness. They are proud of the work they produce and strive to do well in class.

The school ensures that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about different races and religions. They understand the importance of democracy. They vote for their classmates to become members of the school council. There are a range of additional clubs and trips that many pupils enjoy, such as choir.

Governors fulfil their role effectively. They closely monitor the work of leaders and provide challenge and support to ensure pupils are safe and benefit from a good-quality education.

Staff and parents are very positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small minority of subject curriculum plans do not clearly distinguish what pupils of different ages should be able to do when they are taught in mixed-age classes. This means that older pupils are not consistently being given enough opportunities to build on the additional skills and knowledge that they have.

School leaders need to ensure that curriculum plans identify where older pupils can use their prior learning to further increase their knowledge and deepen their understanding.

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	124675
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10255014
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Matthew Carney
Headteacher	Karen Bilner
Website	www.stratfordstmaryprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 January 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors scrutinised SEND support plans from a sample of pupils across different classes.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; 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.
- Inspectors also reviewed documentation relating to governance and school improvement work.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with governors, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's behaviour and attendance records and met with the leader with responsibility for these areas.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils from different classes across both days of inspection.
- The lead inspector considered the 28 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, as well as comments from parents through phone calls and emails. There were no pupil responses to Ofsted's pupil survey or Ofsted's survey of staff.

Inspection team

Bessie Owen, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sally Nutman

Ofsted Inspector

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