

Inspection of a good school: Dronfield Stonelow Junior School

Stonelow Road, Dronfield, Derbyshire S18 2EP

Inspection date: 14 December 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school has high expectations of all pupils. Great care, time and attention is taken to ensure that pupils feel safe, happy and ready to learn. Pupils achieve well. They thrive. Parents and pupils are proud to be part of 'Team Stonelow'.

Pupils' behaviour is extremely well managed. The behaviour policy is clear and understood by all. Pupils who may need additional help to behave well receive exemplary support. Staff are rightly proud of pupils' behaviour and conduct. The school is a calm learning environment in which pupils flourish.

Pupils feel safe from bullying. They have many staff they can turn to if they have worries and concerns. The school has carefully constructed the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. Pupils are well informed about how to keep safe from bullying and other risks they may encounter. The 'well-being warriors' and 'I-vengers' are groups of pupils that ensure that their peers feel well informed and safe, including when online. These pupils take this work extremely seriously. They are great role models.

Pupils, including the most vulnerable, benefit from a wide variety of opportunities outside of the curriculum. They have an appreciation of differing faiths and cultures. The school has received many awards for the way in which it promotes pupils' wider development.

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

Subject leaders are experts. They have a genuine passion for the subjects they oversee. They use their knowledge and enthusiasm to excellent effect. The curriculum is well sequenced and meets the scope of the national curriculum. It is scrupulously planned to make sure that pupils securely gain the knowledge and skills that they need. Pupils,

including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are well prepared for their next stage in learning.

The teaching of reading is extremely strong. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils can read with confidence and enjoyment. The school works in partnership with the local infant schools. They ensure pupils benefit from a continuous, well planned and sequenced reading curriculum. The school constantly reviews its practice. The school learns from national research. It makes sure that it is doing everything it can to help pupils read well. For example, the school promotes the acquisition of extended vocabulary and reading fluency through poetry. Pupils experience high-quality texts of varying genres. They listen in awe to their teachers read. They said that they 'absolutely love reading!'

Staff are well trained. They benefit from high-quality professional development. They enjoy working in partnership with other Dronfield schools. In lessons, they skilfully model their high expectations to pupils. Consequently, pupils are clear about what they need to do when they complete a task. Teachers use questions judiciously. They carefully check that pupils have learned what they have been taught. There is a buzz of learning within every classroom.

Pupils with SEND receive effective support. In lessons, the learning is ambitious and suitably adapted for these pupils. Their needs are quickly identified and addressed. They achieve well.

Some of the most vulnerable pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. This is a legacy of COVID-19. The school is continuing to work with some of these families to improve pupils' attendance.

Pupils receive impressive pastoral care. Staff help them to gain the knowledge needed to regulate their emotions and behaviour. Pupils speak articulately about the importance of mental wellness and the key role this plays in their learning. Parents and pupils are extremely complimentary about the positive impact of the family support worker. Many said they did 'not know where [they] would be' without her, and the support the school provides.

Staff feel extremely well supported. Teachers' well-being is a top priority for leaders. This is appreciated by staff. Staff are proud to be part of the Dronfield Stonelow Junior School family.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Too many vulnerable pupils continue to be persistently absent from school. The school works intensively with families and there are signs of improvement. However, the attendance of some of these pupils is still too low. Leaders must refine their attendance systems and continue their work to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils attend school regularly.

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 2014.

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	112698
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10313222
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Dianne Webster
Headteacher	Catherine Byard
Website	www.dronfieldstonelow.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision for any of its pupils.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher to discuss their evaluation of the quality of education. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body. They spoke with a member of a local authority representative by telephone.
- 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 conducted deep dives in reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors heard pupils read.
- Inspectors observed pupils during the school day as they moved around the school. They observed lunchtime and playtime. They spoke to groups of pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the family support worker. Inspectors reviewed information relating to attendance and pupils' behaviour.
- The views of parents and staff were considered.

Inspection team

Jayne Ashman, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Anne Maingay

His Majesty's Inspector

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