

# Inspection of a good school: Stone Cross School

Adur Drive, Stone Cross, Pevensey, East Sussex BN24 5EF

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Inspection dates:

6 and 7 December 2023

## Outcome

Stone Cross School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

There is a warm and caring atmosphere at Stone Cross School. Pupils are proud to be members of the school community. They feel happy and safe. Pupils demonstrate the school's values of honesty, enthusiasm, aspiration, respect and tolerance through their excellent conduct and positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils are enthusiastic and independent learners. They listen intently in class and work hard to meet teachers' high expectations. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils support each other in their learning and inspire each other to achieve well. They behave sensibly and calmly. Pupils know the school's rules and follow them consistently. Teachers address the very occasional incidents of inappropriate behaviour with 'coaching conversations', and these help pupils to improve their conduct.

The school's rich offer of activities enables pupils to develop new skills and talents. They excitedly sign up for the broad range of clubs available and represent the school in a variety of sports and events. For example, they compete in curling competitions and perform in the local theatre. Pupils in the 'Youth Radio Club' work together to prepare and present radio shows from a professional studio at a local further education college.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum that gives pupils the knowledge and skills they need to be successful. Teachers know pupils well and have matched the curriculum to their needs and interests. In Reception Year, leaders respond to the views of children skilfully to create engaging topics and activities. The school has thoughtfully sequenced the content that pupils learn to deepen their understanding over time. For example, in physical education (PE), pupils learn the important skills of passing and dribbling. They revisit these in a range of sports as they move through the year groups, and this helps them to develop their understanding of the tactical aspects of different sports.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They explain clearly what pupils are learning and design activities to build their knowledge in small steps. Teachers systematically check pupils' understanding and plan additional support to prevent pupils from falling behind. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers adapt their teaching to match the academic and emotional needs of these pupils. Occasionally, these adaptations are not refined well enough to deepen the learning of pupils with SEND.

The school prioritises reading. There is a well-embedded programme for the teaching of phonics. Staff are well trained and demonstrate accurately the sounds and strategies that enable pupils to become fluent readers. Pupils are enthusiastic readers. They discuss excitedly the books and stories they read in school.

The school has responded quickly to low published outcomes in writing by embedding a new approach to the teaching of writing. Pupils now produce well-designed pieces of descriptive and extended writing across the curriculum. Pupils produce high-quality work that clearly demonstrates their deep learning and retention of important knowledge. Consequently, they are well prepared for their next steps. For example, Reception children know important number facts and have a developing rich vocabulary.

Pupils are eager to learn. They concentrate well in their lessons, and classrooms are alive with purposeful chatter as pupils share their ideas and opinions. Pupils show high levels of care and kindness to each other. They enjoy being at school. Pupils share their achievements with staff happily and take great pride in their behaviour. The school monitors pupils' attendance and punctuality carefully. The school uses this to identify pupils and families who may need additional support. As a result, pupils attend frequently.

The school has made pupils' personal development a priority. All pupils learn 'life-long' skills such as leadership and communication. They have a range of opportunities to develop their skills of leadership, including a very active school council and school ambassador roles. Pupils aspire to these roles. They learn about the world of work through well-planned careers lessons and visitors from local businesses. Pupils have mature attitudes to tolerance and diversity. They have a deep understanding of British values such as tolerance and democracy and work hard to embody them.

Governors have high expectations of leaders and hold them to account effectively. Governors engage with staff and pupils well, and this helps them to build their knowledge of the school. Staff enjoy working here. They feel well supported by leaders because of the high-quality training they provide. Parents are very positive about the support pupils receive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- The teaching of writing in the past has not supported all pupils in becoming confident and fluent writers. As a result, pupils have not achieved well in external writing assessments, and some pupils do not write fluently enough. The school must continue to embed its new writing approach to ensure that all pupils can become increasingly confident writers.
- In some subjects, teachers' adaptations for pupils with SEND are not planned appropriately. As a result, these adaptations are not effective in ensuring that all pupils deepen their knowledge and skills fully. The school must ensure that teachers have sufficient knowledge of pupils' needs to plan activities that ensure pupils with SEND achieve well.

## 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 September 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114484
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296185
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	414
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Catriona Matthews
<b>Headteacher</b>	Emma Clements
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stonecrossschool.co.uk">www.stonecrossschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs for 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. The lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher as well as with other leaders and staff. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The lead inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: 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.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.

### **Inspection team**

Gavin Thomas, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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