

Inspection of a good school: Stanford Junior School

Stanford Road, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 5PR

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 March 2024

Outcome

Stanford Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Stanford Junior School's strong community ethos is clear from the moment you cross the threshold. Pupils arrive happily and confidently at the start of the school day. They enjoy catching up with friends, chatting companionably, and sharing their news. During the inspection, for instance, a group of pupils broke into a spontaneous rendition of 'Happy Birthday' to celebrate with a friend.

Pupils welcome visitors warmly, politely asking questions and proudly showing off their school. Staff work very well together to make sure that pupils are safe, comfortable and ready to learn. They have high expectations and want pupils to do their best. Pupils work hard, achieve well and most behave sensibly. Many parents commented on the warmth and kindness of staff towards their children, with one describing the school as: 'A joyful place'.

Pupils enjoy learning and speak enthusiastically about what they like best about school. The school makes sure that all pupils can access the wide range of after-school clubs on offer. Many parents appreciate how much their children enjoy school, with comments such as: 'The topics are made fun and interesting and are always well thought out' and: 'My child is excited about going to school'.

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

The school's broad, balanced and well-enriched curriculum provides pupils with a wealth of activities and experiences. Sport, music and the creative and performing arts are given a high priority. The art curriculum is exceptionally strong. Pupils develop art skills and techniques in a wide range of media and create high-quality work. Most pupils attend school regularly and listen carefully to their teachers.

The school's vibrant curriculum provides pupils with lots of opportunities to find out about the world around them and to discover new interests. Activities such as a recent investigation by pupils into food waste at lunch time help to develop understanding of

environmental and sustainability issues, while a wide range of roles, such as serving on the school council, encourage responsibility.

The teaching of reading is a notable strength in the curriculum. Most pupils enjoy reading and achieve very well by the end of Year 6. In 2023, the proportions of pupils achieving the higher standard in the national tests for reading were well above the national average. More recently, leaders have recognised an increase in the number of pupils needing extra help with reading when they join the school. They have taken steps to support those pupils affected, including providing more time for them to read with an adult. However, leaders recognise that further targeted support is needed for some pupils if they are to make sufficient progress.

In 2023, pupils achieved less well in mathematics than in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2. Leaders have identified aspects of the mathematics curriculum which need further development. They have been working with urgency to develop this area of the school's work and there are clear signs of improvement. For instance, the policy for using practical equipment to develop pupils' mathematical knowledge has been relaunched, and staff training has ensured that this is now a common feature of most mathematics lessons. However, some improvements are not yet fully embedded across the school. Consequently, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Leaders are committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve their full potential, regardless of background or ability. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn alongside their classmates in the classrooms. The curriculum is usually skilfully adapted so that pupils with SEND learn well. However, sometimes staff lack the subject knowledge required to be able to do this precisely enough. Pupils learn less well where this is the case.

Leaders' clarity of vision and determination to provide continuously high-quality education have been key in securing developments since the last inspection. They have been undeterred by setbacks, such as the impact of the pandemic. Leaders engage well with staff and appreciate their hard work during recent developments. Communication between school and home has improved since the previous inspection and many parents consider this to be a strength.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Support for the small number of weaker readers in Year 3 does not always address pupils' needs precisely enough. These pupils make less progress in their reading than

they could as a result. Leaders should make sure that support is more closely matched to those aspects of reading which pupils are finding more difficult.

- The curriculum is not always adapted well enough for pupils with SEND. Pupils achieve less well where this is the case. Leaders should develop staff expertise so that the curriculum is adapted consistently well for pupils with SEND.
- Recent developments in the mathematics curriculum are not fully established in all classrooms. As a result, some pupils learn less well than others in this subject. Leaders should ensure that improvements are securely embedded across the school.

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 May 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

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| Unique reference number | 114376 |
| Local authority | Brighton and Hove |
| Inspection number | 10321791 |
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 305 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Peter Searle |
| Headteacher | Paul Davis |
| Website | www.stanfordjun.brighton-hove.sch.uk |
| Date(s) of previous inspection | 17 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- No relevant changes since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special needs coordinator, and other senior leaders. She also met with five governors, including the chair of governors, and had a telephone conversation with a local authority representative.
- The inspector spoke with a range of staff at different times during the inspection. She also considered the views of staff expressed in Ofsted's survey.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art. Deep dives included visits to lessons, a review of pupils' work, and discussions with leaders, teachers and pupils.

- The inspector spoke with pupils in lessons and at other times of the school day, as well as considering the views expressed in Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector gathered parents' views through Ofsted's survey. She also spoke with parents in person and by telephone during the school day.
- 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' interest first.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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