

Inspection of a good school: Stonegate Church of England Primary School

Station Road, Stonegate, Wadhurst, East Sussex TN5 7EN

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 March 2023

Outcome

Stonegate Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe in the nurturing environment that leaders provide. Supportive relationships are a feature of this school. Pupils know they are valued. Leaders strive for pupils to develop a 'love of learning for life'. The school's values of 'friendship, trust, respect and courage' are lived by all. The school is at the heart of the community. Here, pupils also behave well consistently and the school is calm and orderly. Bullying is very rare. Pupils rightly trust adults to listen and resolve any worries.

Leaders promote an inclusive culture. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive the help they need to learn well. Leaders' ambitious expectations for all pupils to achieve well are met.

Leaders provide a range of clubs to develop pupils' interests and talents. Pupils enjoy learning outside through forest schools. A wealth of visitors, trips and projects within the local community and further afield enable pupils to develop their understanding of the wider world and how to be active citizens. Pupils are proud to contribute to the wider life of the school. Parents and carers are highly positive about the school. They appreciate the experiences that the school provides beyond the academic.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with SEND. The school's 'learning journey' approach enables pupils to make links between subjects. It also enables teachers to meet the needs of mixed-age classes well. The knowledge and skills pupils need to know are identified. However, in a few subjects, pupils' knowledge and skills are not yet precise enough to ensure that pupils' learning builds. Teachers do not always design activities that enable pupils to learn important knowledge in the best order. As a result, pupils do not always develop in-depth knowledge and skills in all subjects.

Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach, and they help pupils to make links with learning that has taken place before. For example, in mathematics, older pupils are able to use their knowledge of calculation methods to solve problems. Leaders have focused on developing high-quality teaching strategies. As a result, teachers know how to adapt learning and to support any pupils who may fall behind. They regularly check pupils' understanding and clarify any misconceptions. This enables pupils to be successful. Teachers make effective use of resources and additional adults, who support pupils well. Leaders have developed detailed systems to check what pupils can do. However, sometimes these checks do not match closely enough to the key knowledge that pupils need to learn.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND. They identify their needs accurately. Pupils receive well-planned support to help them take part in the same curriculum as their peers. The addition of the pre-school has supported the successful transition of children into early years. Staff in early years model language well and guide children to build their learning through well-planned activities.

Leaders have recently strengthened the early reading curriculum and invested in new resources. Phonics teaching is structured effectively and all staff are well trained. Leaders ensure that pupils receive extra support if they fall behind. There is a love of reading in the school. Pupils enjoy author visits, storytimes and visiting the library. During their time at the school, all pupils become successful readers. They achieve well in reading.

Pupils behave extremely well. Pupils work hard in their lessons and are polite and respectful. At playtimes, they play happily and 'peer mediators' provide support to others. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are motivated by rewards, such as house points, 'value stones' and certificates.

Leaders provide pupils with many wider experiences. The school's 'golden threads' are central to this. Pupils particularly enjoy welcoming different visitors, for example a violinist and a beekeeper. Music and performances are a priority and many pupils are part of the choir. Pupils gain an appreciation of other cultures and faiths and know how to keep themselves healthy. Pupils feel that the programme to support their emotional well-being helps them. They enjoy leadership roles such as representing the Student Council and Eco Club or being a Sports Leader. Pupils are proud to contribute to the life of the school.

Governors support and challenge leaders well. They understand their roles and responsibilities. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and staff feel particularly well supported. Leaders have been proactive in developing new staff so that they have the skills to be effective in their roles. Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils achieve their best and are prepared well for the next stage of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff know pupils well. Staff are confident in identifying pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders provide suitable training that helps staff understand safeguarding

risks and how to follow procedures. Leaders act quickly if they have concerns. They keep appropriate records and secure external support, where necessary, to ensure that pupils get the help they need. Leaders carry out robust checks on the recruitment of staff and ensure effective induction.

Pupils learn how to keep safe in the curriculum. They can recognise potential risks offline and online. Governors check regularly that leaders' actions keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which they should learn it is not yet identified precisely enough. This means that pupils do not always develop detailed learning across the curriculum. Leaders should continue to implement their development of the curriculum. This should also include ensuring that teachers match learning activities and assessment more closely to the intended learning.

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 October 2013.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	114523
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10256445
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	114
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kevin Millington
Headteacher	Jonathan Elms
Website	www.stonegate.e-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has opened a pre-school. This was opened in 2020. This provision has capacity for 12 children from two to four.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- Stonegate Church of England Primary School is part of the Diocese of Chichester. The school last received a SIAMS inspection in January 2020. The next section 48 inspection is due in five years.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff, pupils and governors. The inspector also had a discussion with a representative from East Sussex local authority and the Diocese of Chichester.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at

curriculum plans, 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 pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a known adult.
- The inspector observed pupils during breaktimes and spoke with pupils about opportunities for pupils' personal development.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working in the school. The inspector considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. The inspector spoke to pupils, staff and governors about safeguarding practices.
- The inspector considered the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys. They took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and comments made by those who responded.

Inspection team

Alice Early, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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