

Inspection of a good school: Stone St Mary's C of E Primary School

Hayes Road, Horns Cross, Greenhithe, Kent DA9 9EF

Inspection dates:

4–5 February 2020

Outcome

Stone St Mary's C of E Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders, governors and the trust work in a united way. They are determined that every pupil in the school grows and flourishes.

Pupils describe their school as a community where individuals from different backgrounds come together as one. They feel safe and are confident that staff look after them and help them to sort out any problems.

Pupils behave well. They listen to their teachers in lessons and move around the school in a calm way. Behaviour at social times is also strong. Pupils understand the school values of 'caring, growing, shining' and how they help guide their behaviour so that they can all live together harmoniously. Some pupils have had difficult experiences of education in the past. They settle well in this school because of the support that they receive.

Bullying sometimes happens. It is almost always reported and dealt with quickly by leaders. Pupils know what bullying is and that it does not fit in with the school values.

Pupils enjoy attending the wide range of activities provided by the school. These include an extensive range of activities and clubs. The school choir talk enthusiastically about taking part in the 'Young Voices' performance at the 02.

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

Leaders have developed a broad and interesting curriculum. They have ensured that the content of each subject covers what pupils need to learn and that pupils build on their prior learning and make links between subjects. For example, pupils' learning about money in mathematics is linked to the consideration of 'needs and wants' in personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE). Pupils in Year 3 debate whether money is essential. They make links to ancient civilisations where money was not needed. Their discussions about whether it is ethical to buy expensive things when others are living in poverty demonstrate maturity of thought.

The development of reading is a high priority in this school. The foundations are set in Reception, through the systematic teaching of phonics. Lessons are well organised and effective. Teachers use assessment well. They make sure that children who are struggling receive the right support and do not get left behind. Most teachers receive training to teach phonics. This ensures that pupils have effective support in their reading throughout the school.

Guided reading sessions focus on the teaching of specific skills in reading. For example, pupils in Year 6 develop their use of inference. They understand that this involves identifying the 'hidden meaning'. Pupils appreciate the guidance that teachers provide when they choose their reading books. They say that this makes sure that the texts have the right level of challenge. They also enjoy it when their teacher reads to them. One pupil told me that this helped her develop imagery. She explained that when her teacher read the book 'The Boy at the Back of the Class', she gained 'a better understanding of the struggles of refugees'.

Leaders want every child to succeed. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school has developed effective processes for the identification of their needs. This mostly ensures that pupils with SEND receive the right support. They remain in class and enjoy the full curriculum. Leaders are aware, however, that, in some classes, the provision is not always effective. In these cases, there is an over-reliance on adult support and learning is not secure.

Leaders want pupils to become caring and responsible young people. Pupils enjoy taking on positions of responsibility. They become members of the school and eco councils. Here, pupils are able to develop their leadership and organisational skills. They use these skills in a range of activities, including charity work. Classrooms are purposeful places. Pupils understand the rules for how to behave when learning. They respond positively to instructions, work cooperatively and take time to listen to each other.

All staff are proud to work at this school. They feel well supported in their work and say that leaders genuinely care about staff workload. They appreciate the opportunity to work in small teams. This helps reduce the amount of work that they need to do.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders take their safeguarding role seriously. They provide training for all staff so that they are confident in taking the right action should a concern arise.

Staff know their pupils and families well. This ensures that they can spot the signs that extra support is required at an early stage. Leaders work with outside agencies so that families get the help that they need.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They are aware of the dangers in using the internet and how to minimise risk. They know that if they have any concerns they can talk to an adult.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is generally adapted well so that pupils with SEND can access the curriculum and learn well. However, this is not the case in all classes. Leaders are aware that where pupils with SEND are over-reliant on adult support, their learning is less secure. They should continue to ensure that staff have the training they need, and that provision is monitored carefully to make sure that the needs of all pupils with special educational needs are met effectively.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Stone St Mary's C of E Primary School, to be good on 7–8 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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

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| Unique reference number | 144098 |
| Local authority | Kent |
| Inspection number | 10122238 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 635 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Anthony Smith |
| Headteacher | Jane Rolfe |
| Website | www.stone.kent.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 7–8 May 2014 |

Information about this school

- Stone St Mary's joined Aletheia Anglican Academies Trust in April 2017.
- The school had its last section 48 inspection, to inspect the religious character of the school, on 5 February 2016.
- The school is larger than the average primary school. It has grown to a three-form entry primary school and is full in all year groups.
- The school operates a breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- We did deep dives in: reading, mathematics, art and PSHE. We discussed curriculum design with leaders, carried out lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to teachers and pupils from lessons visited about the curriculum.
- I held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders and teachers.
- I met with the safeguarding lead and reviewed the school's single central record. I looked at a range of safeguarding documentation, including a sample of case files, and spoke to pupils and staff.

- I met with four governors, including the chair of governors.
- I met with three members of the trust, including the chief executive officer (CEO) and the chair of the trust.
- I considered the views of 94 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, and 92 additional free-text responses. I also considered the views of 208 responses to the pupils' survey and 44 responses to the survey for staff.

Inspection team

Stephanie Scutter, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lizzie Jeanes

Ofsted Inspector

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