

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Stone St Mary's CofE Primary School

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

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 May 2025

Outcome

Stone St Mary's CofE Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Jane Rolfe. The school is part of Aletheia Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Stephen Carey, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Till.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff and pupils are proud to be a part of this school. They understand and reflect the school's vision of 'caring, growing and shining together'. Children in the early years share and take turns. Pupils celebrate each other's successes, whether that be their achievements in school or beyond. They encourage one another when their classmates demonstrate understanding or have challenged themselves. Pupils' behaviour is calm in the classroom and around the school building. This contributes to pupils feeling safe.

The school has high aspirations for pupils' academic and personal achievements. As a result, many pupils achieve well. Staff encourage pupils to be responsible, to value their own uniqueness and the differences in others. For example, pupils who have school wide responsibilities, such as 'Agents for Change' advocate what it means to be tolerant and respectful of others. Well-being Champions ensure that pupils are happy and can talk about their emotions. This helps pupils to develop their character and show mutual respect to others.

Pupils make positive contributions to their community. Each class learn about, and chooses a charity to fundraise for. They get to understand who they are helping and the impact of their actions. Pupils sing at local churches. They visit residential care homes to knit and crotchet with residents. Pupils are respectful, kind and highly inclusive.

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

There is an ambitious curriculum, including for children in the early years. It is designed to and readies pupils for secondary school and teaches them important life skills, such as budgeting and work experience.

Subject curriculums are sequenced to build knowledge over time. Teachers deliver subject content in this precise order This supports pupils to learn more because new learning builds on what they know and can do. In lessons, pupils revisit and practise what they already know. Teachers typically check pupils' understanding regularly. They usually address errors and misconceptions well because they have strong subject knowledge. This means most pupils recall their learning effectively and develop their knowledge over time. However, in a few curriculum areas, teachers checks on what pupils know, can do or have built fluency in are not as robust. This means that some gaps develop in pupils' knowledge which hinders their progress with more complex tasks.

The school ensures that pupils read a wide variety of texts which encourage pupils' enthusiasm for reading. Pupils value reading a variety of books from a diverse range of cultures and backgrounds. Staff regularly check pupils' reading skills. For those pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read, books are carefully matched to the sounds they know. Staff identify pupils at risk of falling behind. They are helped to catch up quickly. This contributes to pupils becoming confident, fluent readers.

The school identifies pupils who may require additional support swiftly. Teachers adapt lessons and resources to ensure pupils can attend to their learning well. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported through an adapted curriculum, which is personalised to take into account their individual needs.

Children are taught routines and behavioural expectations when they begin in the early years. This prepares them for their next stage of learning. Pupils typically behave sensibly in the classroom and outside. Pupils are keen to share what they know and can do. Pupils told inspectors that staff care for them and there is always a trusted adult they can talk to if they are worried or upset. Pupils enjoy going to school and they typically attend regularly.

The school provides many experiences to develop pupils' confidence and resilience. Pupils attend theatre productions on how to stay safe online. They learn about rail safety and how to communicate their feelings and emotions. Pupils can attend a range of competitive events such as mini-marathons or trust-led debates. All pupils have opportunities to perform in front of an audience. The school provides a wide choice of clubs, including performing arts, yoga and dodgeball. This helps to develop pupils' interests and nurture their talents.

The school works closely with the trust's best practice and school improvement teams. They support staff to strengthen their teaching expertise and identify the right areas for

development. The governing body scrutinise the school's effectiveness. They assure themselves that the decisions made by school leaders are the right ones for the pupils. This helps to ensure the school maintains its high standards.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the checks on what pupils know and can do are not as robust. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and skills in these areas. Leaders should ensure all staff have the knowledge and expertise needed to identify and address gaps in those subjects.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness 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

Unique reference number	144098
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10379908
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	640
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Till
CEO of the trust	Stephen Carey
Headteacher	Jane Rolfe
Website	www.stone.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Aletheia Academies Trust.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to some pupils about their learning.

- 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 spoke with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. They also spoke with the CEO and other executive leaders and trustees.
- Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Kieran Bird, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Catherine Hylands

Ofsted Inspector

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