School report

Inspection of Sturton CofE Primary School

Church Street, Sturton-le-Steeple, Retford, Nottinghamshire DN22 9HQ

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, staff, parents and carers are full of praise for the school. Pupils say that they feel safe because 'staff are always there for you'. Pupils enjoy being part of a small school because 'everyone is supportive' and it is easy to make friends. Parents strongly endorse the school. They typically describe it as a 'fantastic' place where their children can thrive and learn.

There is a calm, happy atmosphere around the school. Pupils behave well in lessons and at other times of the day. They respond well to the clear routines and expectations that staff set for them. Pupils are enthusiastic learners who try their best in lessons. Pupils take pride in completing work, reflecting their positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils make the most of the extensive, well-equipped outdoor areas. These well-planned spaces enable pupils to develop their physical fitness and social skills. All pupils can access a range of popular, extra-curricular activities. Older pupils enjoy helping the younger ones. They are proud to act as role models for them.

Pupils understand the importance of respect and equality. They say that teasing or bullying is not an issue because 'everyone should be treated fairly'.

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

Leaders are currently revising the school's curriculum so that it sets out the key knowledge and skills that pupils should develop, from the early years to Year 6. This work is almost complete. In a small number of subjects, leaders recognise that there is more work needed to refine the existing curriculum. There is a clear plan to complete the curriculum revision over the coming months.

Leaders, staff and governors are united in their ambition for all pupils to develop as well-rounded individuals who are well prepared for secondary education. This ambition includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For those pupils, leaders are quick to identify their needs. Staff adapt their teaching so that pupils with SEND are fully included in lessons and the wider life of the school. For example, in mathematics, teachers break down new concepts into small, manageable steps for pupils with SEND.

Leaders prioritise reading, describing it as being 'at the centre of the curriculum'. Leaders and staff encourage pupils of all ages to develop a love of books and reading. There is a well-established programme for teaching early reading and phonics. This begins straight away in the early years class and continues for as long as it is needed. Pupils develop quickly as fluent, confident readers.

Pupils are equally confident in mathematics. Staff deliver a well-structured programme that enables pupils to build knowledge and skills over time. Teachers

regularly check how well pupils are progressing. They quickly pick up on any mistakes so that pupils know how well they are doing.

Children in the early years make a strong start to their education. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum provides a secure foundation for future learning. Staff in the early years work closely as a team. They provide carefully planned activities and experiences across all areas of learning. Above all, staff prioritise children's language development as they play and converse together.

Leaders promote pupils' wider personal development well, through the curriculum and beyond. There is a substantial personal, social and health education curriculum. This is supplemented by occasional 'life skills' workshops covering themes such as fire and road safety and 'mini-medics' life-saving skills. Pupils also receive age-appropriate teaching about healthy relationships and sex education. All of these opportunities support pupils to develop as mature, thoughtful individuals.

In recognition of the school's context in a small rural village, leaders are keen to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Through the religious education lessons, pupils learn about a range of faiths as well as Christianity. However, pupils' recall and understanding of the broader range of faiths is not yet secure. Pupils have limited awareness of fundamental British values such as democracy. These aspects of the school's provision are not as well embedded as other areas.

Staff are very proud to work at the school. They say that leaders care about their workload and well-being. They praise the strong sense of supportive teamwork across the school. Governors value the contribution that a well-trained staff team makes to the school. They encourage staff to undertake regular training to further their careers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding. As a small school, everyone knows the pupils, and their families, well. This means that they are quick to recognise any concerns. However, this has not led to complacency. Leaders have ensured that all policies and procedures are robust. Staff training is thorough and up to date. Should a concern arise, leaders respond quickly and appropriately. They work effectively with parents and external organisations in the best interests of the pupils.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. They say that they feel very safe in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of foundation subjects, the curriculum is not yet fully mapped out and sequenced in all aspects, taking account of the mixed-age classes. Sometimes, the subject knowledge is not broken down into its component parts, both established facts and the methods that establish them. In those subjects, pupils' recall and understanding are less secure. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum sets out precisely what pupils should know, and when, in all subjects so that pupils know and remember more over time.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not as well supported as it should be in some respects. Pupils do not yet have a secure understanding of a range of faiths and cultures and the meaning of fundamental British values. Leaders should ensure that they prepare pupils for life in modern Britain by encouraging them to develop well-informed respect for people who hold a range of faiths and beliefs.

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	122808
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10268835
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Julie Barlow
Headteacher	Mark Elliott
Website	www.sturton.notts.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior and curriculum leaders.
- The lead inspector met with several members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils

about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector observed some pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and reviewed curriculum planning and samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times around school.
- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding by reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks and holding discussions with leaders, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rachel Tordoff	His Majesty's Inspector

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