

Inspection of a good school: Stoke Gabriel Primary School

School Hill, Stoke Gabriel, Totnes, Devon TQ9 6ST

Inspection date: 26 March 2024

Outcome

Stoke Gabriel Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils understand and live out the school values of community, character, courage and creativity. They are happy to belong to this friendly school. Pupils are safe and learn well.

The trust and school want the best for pupils and have high expectations of them. Pupils work hard, and most have positive attitudes and behave well. They move around the school in a calm and orderly fashion. Playtimes are fun and lively. Pupils enjoy playing football or spending time with the school dog, Moose. Those who find the busy lunchtime environment difficult can attend lunchtime club, where they complete indoor activities and talk with staff.

Pupils look forward to taking part in residential trips. They learn to be resilient and face new and adventurous challenges, such as coastering, with confidence. The school provides a range of extra-curricular clubs like rugby and coding clubs. Pupil voice is integral to school life. The school council make suggestions about other clubs. The school listens to and acts upon this, providing opportunities that develop pupils' interests.

Parents are very pleased that their children come to this school. They appreciate the dedication of staff, commenting that 'the staff are all incredibly caring and helpful.'

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

The school has designed a curriculum that is suitable for mixed-aged classes. In most subjects, the curriculum is clearly sequenced. Pupils build new knowledge on the foundations that have been laid before. For example, in mathematics, children in the early years learn about how different combinations of numbers work together to form pairs of numbers. Older pupils build on this as they learn about fractions and decimals. Pupils explain their thinking well. This helps them tackle more complex concepts, such as when solving problems, with confidence.

In some subjects, the school has not identified the key building blocks of knowledge that pupils need to learn. Learning is not always precise enough. Consequently, pupils do not build the same depth of knowledge as they do in the more established subjects. In addition, some staff are unclear about the best ways to deliver the planned curriculum. As a result, the curriculum does not always have the impact that the school intends.

In the early years, clear routines and high expectations help children to settle well. In the pre-school, activities are chosen that support children to develop important fine motor skills. In Reception Year, there is a strong focus on developing children's language and communication skills. Adults guide and question children to help them to think about the world around them and deepen their learning.

Reading is a priority. In Reception Year, children learn the phonics code as soon as they start school. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know. This develops their reading accuracy and confidence. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind receive extra phonics sessions to help them catch up. Most pupils can read well by the time they leave key stage 1. Older pupils discuss their favourite authors and learn more challenging concepts such as inference and authorial intent. Over time, pupils become more skilled readers.

The school is ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to achieve well. Expertise from the trust and school ensure that learning is adapted effectively for pupils with SEND. The leadership of this area is a strength. Pupils' individual plans set out small and measurable targets for them to achieve. Across the school, pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as their peers.

The school is working closely with families to break down barriers that prevent pupils from coming to school. Overall, attendance has improved. However, some individual pupils miss too much school. This hinders their learning. The school has identified the reasons for pupils' absence, but its actions have not had enough impact.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils' broader development. Events like 'international days' raise pupils' awareness of cultures that are different from their own. Despite this, some pupils' understanding of world religions is limited. Pupils understand the fundamental British values, such as democracy and the rule of law. For example, they vote for school council representatives. Pupils have respectful attitudes towards difference and a firm understanding of equality.

Staff appreciate the time leaders provide when introducing new initiatives. Staff feel part of the decision-making process. They are proud to work at the school.

Trustees and governors are acutely aware of the strengths and areas the school is working on to improve. They support and challenge the school well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not identified the small steps of knowledge that it wants pupils to know and remember in some subjects. This means that staff are less secure in the delivery of the curriculum, and pupils do not build the same depth of knowledge as they do in the more established subjects. The school should refine the curriculum and ensure that staff know exactly what pupils need to learn and how best to implement it, so pupils learn well over time in all subjects.
- The actions that the school has taken to improve persistent absence are relatively new. They have not yet had the impact on individual pupils' attendance. Consequently, these pupils miss out on important learning and their progress is hindered. The school and trust need to ensure that actions taken are fully embedded so that persistent absence is reduced.

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 predecessor school, Stoke Gabriel Primary School, to be good in March 2012.

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	142639
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10334714
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Cheryl Mathieson
CEO of the trust	Nicola Dunford
Headteacher	Alice Eeles
Website	www.stokegabriel.thelink.academy/web
Date of previous inspection	11 December 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average primary school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school operates a nursery, on a different site, which has two-, three- and four-year-old children attend.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding lead, members of staff, the chief executive officer of the trust,

trust director of education, chair of the trust board, a trustee and a member of the local advisory committee.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited samples of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult and spoke with pupils about their learning in other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments, and the staff surveys.

Inspection team

Gavin Summerfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Kathy Maddocks

Ofsted Inspector

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