

Stockham Primary School

Stockham Way, Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 9HL

Inspection dates

28–29 March 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders and teachers are single-minded in their pursuit of excellence. The school's motto, 'Soaring high', underpins all aspects of its work.
- Parents and carers, pupils and staff are united in their praise of the school and its leaders, especially the impact of the headteacher. Her high standards and unwavering determination have enabled the school to go from strength to strength.
- Subject leaders are highly capable. They use their strong subject expertise to enhance pupils' learning. Key stage leaders collaborate very effectively with subject leaders.
- The curriculum has been adeptly planned and implemented. Pupils successfully acquire a wide range of subject-specific knowledge and skills, which they adroitly apply.
- Pupils achieve well above average in key stage 2 national tests. Across the school, most-able pupils fulfil their potential. In key stage 1, pupils make very strong progress from lower-than-average starting points.
- Due to better support and new approaches to teaching, progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is improving, especially in key stage 2. Disadvantaged pupils' progress is at least as strong as the progress made by others.
- Teaching is outstanding. The teaching of writing, in particular, has improved. Teachers also use their well-developed subject expertise to introduce and embed complex concepts, most noticeably in mathematics.
- Pupils are extremely motivated to learn. They enjoy reading and accessing rich texts. Due to teachers' enthusiasm and commitment, pupils display high levels of interest in a broad range of subjects.
- Highly bespoke and carefully targeted support means that pupils who have additional needs do well at the school. All staff are dedicated to doing the best they can for every pupil.
- Governance is extremely effective. Governors have helped to embed the school's aspirational and inclusive ethos. Governors use their detailed knowledge of the school to hold leaders to account.
- Early years gives children an excellent start. Dynamic leadership ensures that children acquire the habits, knowledge and skills they need to cope with the demands of Year 1.
- Supporting the increasingly high proportion of pupils with SEND has rightly been identified as a key priority in improvement plans. Leaders are aware that there needs to be more capacity in the leadership of SEND.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen capacity in the leadership of provision for pupils with SEND.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher, with steely determination, has systematically improved the school, making changes that have been of direct benefit to its pupils. Very ably supported by senior and subject leaders, she has raised expectations and created an environment which enables all pupils to flourish, including those who have to overcome additional barriers to succeed in their learning.
- The headteacher has instilled staff with a sense of urgency and moral purpose, developing expertise and capabilities across the staff body. Leaders are also outward-looking and reflective. Staff benefit from the access they have to exciting development opportunities. They are unanimous in their praise for the way in which the school is led and the positive working environment created by the headteacher and senior leaders.
- Leaders set the bar high and no aspect of provision is overlooked in their exacting evaluations. However, this is also a very humane and nurturing school. Of note is the way that subject leaders keep a close watch on pupils' learning and progress in the subjects they manage. They also use their expertise to ensure that teachers feel confident in implementing new subject-focused approaches.
- Stakeholders are committed to the school's mantra, 'Soaring high', not least because leaders and governors consult widely on the direction the school should take. They ensure that all stakeholders get the chance to contribute to, and refine, the school's vision and values, for example through biannual 'visioning days'. Links with other primary schools, pre-school providers and local secondary schools are also impressive. The links are enhanced by the headteacher currently performing the role of chair of the local collaboration of schools known as 'The Springline Partnership'.
- The school's curriculum has been expertly planned and sequenced so that pupils gain a secure body of knowledge and skills across a broad range of subjects. In particular, curriculums for individual subjects have been imaginatively designed and thoughtfully implemented. As a result, pupils' horizons are extended and their intellectual curiosity is aroused. Subject leaders and senior leaders carefully monitor the impact of the curriculum. They especially focus on how effectively topics are linked together so that pupils can build webs of interconnected knowledge.
- Subject leaders ensure that the vast array of visits and trips the school provides are placed at opportune points to enrich pupils' subject-specific knowledge, understanding and vocabulary. As a result, trips and visits are fully integrated into programmes of learning and add to pupils' subject expertise. For example, pupils studying ancient civilisations in history gained valuable insights into the Mayan civilisation during a visit by an archaeologist to talk about Mayan pottery. Pupils used this knowledge in their subsequent work on the Mayans and built on it further through their own research.
- As part of a much broader drive to boost pupils' well-being, sense of self-worth, resilience and physical fitness, leaders have systematically developed the extra-curricular opportunities on offer. The designated leader is unyielding in her determination to ensure that all pupils, especially those with SEND and other additional needs, access these opportunities. She keeps close tabs on what clubs pupils attend so

that all pupils get the chance to cultivate their individual talents, pursue their hobbies and keep active.

- The sport premium funding is used exceptionally well so that it genuinely strengthens teachers' capacity to deliver the physical education (PE) curriculum. The school has received external awards for its work in developing PE and sports. The designated leader has a detailed implementation plan which she monitors carefully. As a result of very effective practice in this area, a high proportion of pupils participate in sport and fitness activities on a daily basis, belong to school teams and take part in sporting competitions.
- Leaders and governors have given careful consideration to how best to support disadvantaged pupils. Plans for additional funding indicate precisely how leaders have deployed different types of support so that pupils can overcome the specific barriers they face. As a result, pupil premium funding provides highly bespoke assistance, most of which is having a very positive impact on pupils' learning and well-being.
- The leadership of SEND is improving, and some aspects are very strong. For example, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has wisely used additional funding to provide internal and external training for teaching assistants. As a result, teaching assistants' capabilities have been very successfully developed. Their increased expertise has meant that most pupils whom they support are able to access work that is pitched at age-related expectations. The proportion of pupils with SEND has rapidly increased over the last few years. Leaders have identified that more capacity in the leadership of SEND is needed to meet this increasing demand.

Governance of the school

- Governance is highly effective because governors are passionate advocates of the school and are also totally committed to its aims. The governing body plays a crucial role in promoting the inclusive and aspirational ethos of the school. Governors work closely with leaders to define the school's vision and values and disseminate them to the school's stakeholders.
- Governors build strong and lasting relationships with pupils and parents. They are linked to the same class as it moves up through the school. In addition, governors receive regular updates on how well pupils are learning and achieving from subject leaders. As a result, governors gain a deep understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use their multifaceted knowledge to ask challenging questions and hold leaders to account. For example, they have challenged leaders as to whether some additional activities paid for with pupil premium funding are having a positive enough impact.
- Governors have thought carefully about how best to develop the governing body. The chair and vice-chair of the governing body have ensured that governors' knowledge and skills are up to date and that individual governors' expertise is being fully utilised. For instance, a governor with expertise in health and safety is the designated safeguarding governor and regularly conducts audits and spot checks.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher tirelessly reviews all safeguarding concerns. She makes well-informed decisions as to any next steps, including referring concerns to the local authority. She tenaciously follows up on any referrals made to the local authority and has, on occasion, challenged the authority about the decisions welfare officers have made.
- Leaders have put in place a raft of support for children who have social, emotional and/or mental health needs, including engaging a play therapist for younger pupils. Leaders have identified that these pupils are very vulnerable to harm, and are doing everything possible to protect them and to assist their families. For instance, a designated, highly trained member of staff works closely with pupils' families, offering support and guidance on a variety of issues. Parents commented favourably on additional support, which is of high quality and closely supervised. Of note is the way that staff evaluate the impact of their work to support pupils and their families, using a range of carefully considered indicators.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding, especially in upper key stage 2. New approaches to teaching mathematics and writing are working extremely well across the school. The teaching of reading has been successfully developed over time. Pupils relish the challenge and pace of their learning.
- Pupils participate very actively in their learning and can articulate clearly which aspects they find challenging and why. Pupils confidently employ appropriate vocabulary when discussing their learning. Their highly developed understanding of how they learn best assists them in finding successful methods and techniques to employ when tackling tough tasks.
- Each teacher champions the school's aspirational mantra, 'Soaring high', through the topics they introduce and the approaches they use. Teachers carefully introduce complex concepts. They take time to ensure that the concepts are fully understood by pupils through detailed explanations, probing questioning and carefully designed activities.
- The teaching of reading is effective and makes close links with pupils' writing. Pupils benefit from accessing rich and challenging texts. This includes more complex books that teachers read aloud to them, using the books as models and inspiration for the pupils' own writing. Teachers encourage pupils to make ambitious choices about the vocabulary, grammar and punctuation they employ, keeping the overall purpose of their writing at the forefront of their minds when making these decisions. As a consequence, the grammar, vocabulary and punctuation that pupils use strengthen the overall impact their writing has on the reader.
- Of note is the ambitious approach to teaching mathematics, which is consistent across the school. Pupils of all abilities in each class access key mathematical knowledge and concepts at the highest level they can. Pupils master any new mathematical knowledge very well because it is embedded through exercises, tests and teachers' probing

questions. Pupils use their embedded knowledge and secure understanding of concepts with great flair when solving mathematical problems.

- Teaching enables pupils to make strides in their learning because teachers have strong subject knowledge which they bring to bear when setting tasks and giving feedback to pupils about how they can improve their work. Teachers also ensure that pupils learn, understand and remember subject-specific vocabulary, including grammatical terminology.
- Teaching in history, science and geography is especially effective. This is because subject leaders work closely with teachers to ensure that teachers know how to deliver the planned learning. Pupils' work shows that, over time, they build up a detailed web of knowledge in a range of topics from different subjects. The depth of pupils' knowledge is enhanced through visits from carefully chosen experts who introduce new ways of thinking about the topics, as well as from the specialist information they impart.
- Teaching assistants make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning because the assistants have benefited from subject-specific training, for example in mathematics mastery, as well as broader development. Teaching assistants make excellent use of their detailed knowledge of the pupils and of the demands of the subject matter when deciding upon the nature of the support they provide. Pupils commented positively on the help they receive in class from teaching assistants.
- Across the school, teaching and learning offer high levels of challenge to pupils, including those with SEND. However, the rising number of pupils with SEND is placing some pressure on the school's capacity to ensure that teaching continues to meet these pupils' needs as effectively as it has up to now.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding, not least because the school has invested time, effort and great thought into this aspect of its work.
- The atmosphere in school is exceptionally positive, and a tremendous energy permeates throughout the school. Pupils 'fizz' with excitement about what they have just learned or are about to learn.
- Parents highly praise the culture in the school, which is both nurturing and aspirational. One, echoing the views of many, commented in the parent survey for the inspection:

'There is a real sense of the children wanting to commit to their learning journey by being immersed in the ethos and vision of the school – soaring high. It is notable to see how these attributes are already beginning to shape them into well-rounded and confident children.'
- Leaders ensure that pupils who have low self-esteem, have difficulty in managing their behaviour and/or emotions or who suffer from anxiety are extremely well supported through the additional help they receive. The school has built a team of specialist staff,

including therapists, who undertake this aspect of the school's work with high levels of professionalism.

- Leaders have ensured that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is successfully threaded through all subjects and experiences. The different elements of pupils' SMSC development are carefully monitored to ensure that all aspects are given equal emphasis. The recent introduction of 'mindfulness' sessions for all classes has been in response to leaders' checks which indicated that pupils' spiritual development was not as strong as other aspects. Pupils commented positively on the effect these sessions were having on them.
- A very comprehensive personal development programme supports pupils in acquiring a deep understanding of the different types of risks they face, including risks from social media and the internet.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Around the school, at play and in class, pupils show high levels of respect for each other and their teachers. They willingly adhere to rules and follow teachers' instructions.
- Pupils spoke to inspectors about the importance of treating others with respect and showed high levels of awareness about equalities. Pupils told inspectors that they feel very safe when at school and that teachers deal with the rare instances of bullying very well.
- In line with the school's inclusive ethos, leaders have been tenacious in finding approaches that are suitable for the very small number of pupils who have high-level behavioural needs. These approaches have been finely tuned over time and include carefully implemented sanctions, as well as suitable rewards. Pupils with challenging behaviour have been successfully assisted in staying in school and making progress.
- Due to strengths in provision and top-quality support for pupils and their families, attendance is above the national average and persistent absence is well below average.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Top-notch teaching, impressive support systems, high expectations for all and the excellent curriculum across a range of subjects mean that pupils' achievement is generally very high. They reach particularly high standards in science, history and geography, as well as in English and mathematics. As a result, pupils leave the school very well equipped for the demands of their secondary education.
- In 2018 key stage 2 tests and assessments, a much-higher-than-average proportion of pupils achieved age-related expectations in mathematics, reading and writing. These results are similar to results from the two previous academic years. Pupils also achieved very well in science, and in the grammar, punctuation and spelling tests. Pupils in key stage 1 make strong progress. Their achievement in end-of-key-stage assessments is at least in line with national averages.

- Most-able pupils do particularly well, making very strong progress and fulfilling their potential. In 2018, nearly half of Year 6 pupils achieved the higher standard for mathematics in national tests, and over one third were assessed at the higher standard in writing. In key stage 1 national assessments in 2018, one in four pupils were assessed as achieving at greater depth in reading and in mathematics, which is significantly above national averages.
- Over the last three years, pupils' progress in key stage 2 has been above average. It was significantly above average in 2016 and 2017 in reading and in mathematics. It dropped in these subjects in 2018 but this was because a very small number of pupils with SEND, who had significant barriers to overcome, did not make strong progress in national tests and assessments. They did, however, make impressive progress on the individual programmes of learning they were following.
- Work in books and the school's own assessment information show that pupils' current progress is generally very strong, including for disadvantaged pupils. It gets stronger the longer pupils are at the school. Due to changes made to the teaching of writing, progress is improving rapidly. This was well evidenced in the quality of writing pupils are currently producing.
- Due to a number of new approaches, including raised expectations, pupils with SEND are now making better progress, with a number of pupils exceeding their targets for progress. A high proportion of this group of pupils are also eligible for pupil premium funding. Progress for pupils with SEND gets stronger as they move up through the school, benefiting from greater access to highly effective teaching and the impressive range of support the school provides.
- Pupils achieve highly in phonics. From very low starting points when they enter Reception, pupils make very strong progress in early reading due to additional support and strong teaching. In both 2018 and 2017, a very small proportion of Year 1 pupils, some with SEND, did not meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check. The overwhelming majority of pupils met the expected standard when they retook the check in Year 2 in 2018. Overall, the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard by the end of Year 2 is well above the national average.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The recently appointed early years leader has successfully refined all aspects of the provision. The early years provides children with an excellent start in their schooling. Children in the setting are highly stimulated by the range of activities they access and acquire a very solid grounding in mathematics, reading and writing.
- The early years setting is remarkably harmonious and orderly. Children enjoy the play that they initiate, as well as the more structured learning activities. Inspectors observed children taking great delight in learning about symmetry by decorating butterfly wings. More formal activities are purposefully introduced in order to arouse children's curiosity, embed key concepts, promote communication and extend their vocabulary.
- Children develop rapidly due to the designated leader's fine-grained understanding of how well each child is doing in all aspects of their learning. Her close monitoring means

that any emerging gaps in children's learning are identified rapidly, carefully planned support is provided and they catch up. Children leave the setting very well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.

- The starting points for children joining the setting vary. However, over the past few years, the profile has changed, with an increasing proportion of children arriving with SEND and/or developmental levels below what might be expected. The first-rate provision in early years means that children make very strong progress from their starting points and, in 2018, an above-average proportion reached a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- The teaching of phonics is impressive. The early years leader keeps a very close eye on all the children while they practise the sounds made by different letters, quickly addressing any misconceptions as they arise. She employs a variety of approaches to ensure that all children can recognise and remember words which do not follow phonics patterns. As a consequence, children in early years make great strides in early reading.
- Children in the setting develop their vocabulary and speech very well. Adults make sure that children mimic and rehearse difficult sounds and join in enthusiastically with whole-class recitations of rhymes and ditties. As a result, pupils' confidence in using language develops rapidly. They are able to ask questions, share ideas and even take on leadership roles within the setting. For instance, each day, different children take on the role of safety monitor and complete safety checklists, demonstrating high levels of communication.
- As is the case elsewhere in the school, teaching assistants make a superb contribution to children's learning, using questioning to introduce new concepts and deepen children's learning. Assistants are very effectively supervised by the early years leader, who has carefully considered ideas to develop how adults in the setting work with children. She has recently extended her plans so that they include developing the way parents support learning at home. For example, many parents attended an open evening early on in the academic year to find out how they could best support their children's learning.
- Children are fully versed in the routines of the setting. They move seamlessly from whole-class teaching sessions to playing in the outdoor play area. The outdoor area provides many well-planned opportunities for pupils to draw, write and use their number knowledge. The indoor and outdoor areas are safe, and children in the setting are very well cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	123072
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10058148

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Heena Brown
Headteacher	Mrs Ruth Burbank
Telephone number	01235 764 407
Website	www.stockham.oxon.sch.uk
Email address	office.2583@stockham.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 March 2018

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It serves the west of Wantage.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The headteacher is the chair of the local collaboration of primary schools and a special school, known as the Springline Partnership.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. A growing proportion of this group now come from service families moving into the local area.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND supported by the school is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with SEND who have an education, health and care plan is also above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to observe learning in all classes, including subjects other than English and mathematics. On most occasions, but not all, they were accompanied by senior leaders. Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised by inspectors on two separate occasions. On the second occasion, the headteacher and senior leaders joined inspectors.
- Inspectors met with two different groups of pupils. On the second occasion, they heard pupils read. Two separate meetings were held with the headteacher accompanied by the assistant headteacher. Inspectors also held separate meetings with senior leaders about the curriculum, a group of subject leaders and the SENCo. The vice-chair of the governing body and three other governors met with the lead inspector. A telephone call was made to the school improvement partner who supports the school on behalf of the local authority.
- Inspectors also met separately with leaders responsible for early years, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, and also with staff who support families. They also held a meeting with a group of staff, which included newly qualified teachers and teaching assistants. At the end of the school day on the first day of the inspection, an inspector met informally with parents.
- Documentation and policies, which included the school's own evaluation, development plans and pupils' progress information, were reviewed. Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding records, including safety checks made when teachers are appointed, risk assessments and a selection of pupils' and teachers' files.
- Inspectors reviewed 81 responses to the pupil questionnaire, 34 comments made using the free-text facility on Parent View and 63 responses to the Parent View survey.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector

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