

# Stanton School

Fairfax, Bradville, Milton Keynes MK13 7BE

**Inspection dates** 2–3 March 2016

**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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school

- Led by the highly effective headteacher, the school's leaders provide an excellent environment for learning so pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils' progress is strongly enhanced by the successful federation between this school and its main infant feeder school.
- Pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points. Lower achieving and disadvantaged pupils make significantly above average progress. The school's leaders successfully remove barriers to pupils' progress.
- In 2015, very strong progress led to a higher than average proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving level 5 and above in writing and in English punctuation, spelling and grammar.
- Published information indicates a dip in pupils' progress, including that of disadvantaged pupils, in reading, in 2015. However, pupils currently at the school make very strong, and in some cases exceptionally strong, progress in reading.
- The reading and writing leaders are highly skilled and, as a result, teachers consistently employ very effective approaches to teaching reading and writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils do very well. There are few gaps between their progress and others within school and nationally. Any gaps that currently exist are narrow and there are excellent plans in place to ensure that they are rapidly closed.
- The new approach for tracking pupils' progress is effective. It deftly helps leaders to identify pupils
- The mathematics leader's strong subject knowledge and excellent understanding of how pupils best acquire mathematical skills has led to better progress.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school because it ensures that pupils acquire the skills they need to achieve in a wide range of academic subjects, as well as a passion for arts and music.
- Pupils are very well taught in history, geography and science. They develop strong subject knowledge and enthusiasm for these subjects.
- Pupils' attendance is very high because they relish their schooling and if their attendance dips, leaders take highly effective action.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons and around school. Pupils display a heartfelt enjoyment for the subjects they study.
- Pupils are very positive about their learning. They learn from each other, and support the pupils they are partnered with very well.
- Safeguarding is very effectively led. The leader has extensive local knowledge, which enables her to pinpoint where the biggest risks lie and act accordingly to prevent pupils from being harmed.
- The school's work to promote social, spiritual, moral and cultural education is exceptional because it is thoroughly planned and evaluated.
- More effective governance has made a significant contribution to moving the school forward. A number of governors have used their extensive knowledge to challenge the school to do better.

who need to make rapid progress to catch up.

They have provided leaders with useful guidance.

## **Full report**

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Carefully monitor whether pupils' handwriting is consistently in line with the school's policy.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- Leaders' outstanding drive and ambition have ensured that pupils are exceedingly well motivated, achieve highly and conduct themselves very well. Pupils are justifiably proud of their school, and thrive on the varied and well thought out opportunities for success provided by the school.
- Pupils' sense of self-worth is successfully encouraged through the school's inspirational 'PROUD' mantra, and the excellent learning environment which includes displays about past pupils who have achieved prowess in a range of different skills. The school's leaders provide outstanding support for pupils to ensure that all barriers to success are removed. This includes funding pupils so they can attend subject-related school trips and skills-based clubs.
- Both the parent and staff bodies are highly supportive of the improvements the headteacher has made. Parents value the way their youngsters are stimulated and cared for. One commented, 'This school has become excellent. It motivates its pupils with stimulating lessons and inspires them to do more.' Similarly, the staff survey was overwhelmingly positive about the leadership of the school and one staff member commented, 'All staff members, no matter what their role, work together as a team. Staff morale is very high and we enjoy coming to work. This has a positive impact on the teaching.'
- The headteacher's aspirational vision to improve the education in the community is very well realised through the school's federation with the nearby main feeder infant school (Pepper Hill). Leaders oversee subjects and pupils in both schools. Consequently, they have highly detailed knowledge of the majority of pupils' learning strengths and any areas for development from when they join. This enables additional help to be provided very promptly and pupils consequently make swift progress.
- Leaders ensure that agreed approaches are effective and all staff adhere to them. High levels of consistency in routines, approaches to learning and teachers' marking mean that pupils are very clear about what they need to do in order to succeed. This is further aided by the fact that there are many common approaches between the federated schools, which help the majority of pupils to continue their learning seamlessly as they move to junior school. No time is lost by teachers unnecessarily revisiting old learning.
- Subject leaders are very effective and make a substantial contribution to the school's success. They carefully monitor the impact of agreed new approaches through checking pupils' books, observing lessons and keeping a sharp eye on pupils' progress. If their checks indicate that some pupils' progress is slower, they are highly skilled at training teachers and assistants in how best to use agreed approaches to accelerate progress, and where necessary guide staff to introduce additional, effective approaches that are tailor-made for each class.
- Teachers very adeptly use the school's new approach to assessing pupils without levels. By sharing pupils' work with other schools, teachers are confident that their view of what pupils need to do to reach age-related expectations in each subject is accurate. Teachers make particularly effective use of charts, skilfully generated by the assessment manager, which pictorially indicate the progress that targeted pupils are making towards age-related expectations. They use these to ensure that the work they plan is stretching pupils enough.
- Performance management makes a significantly positive contribution to moving the school forward. It is excellently overseen by the headteacher who rigorously checks teachers' targets to ensure that they include aspirational goals for the progress of pupils in their classes. Leaders are well served by being encouraged to set targets that require them to develop key leadership skills, such as the ability to have successful conversations about the performance of the staff they manage.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used very effectively and has led to strong progress for this group. Of particular note is the impact of the school taking disadvantaged pupils away on 'training camps' that adeptly combine enjoyment and exercise with intensive practice of key learning. This approach is improving the current progress of disadvantaged pupils who are involved. Last year it helped to improve the achievement of targeted pupils in the English spelling, punctuation and grammar test.

- The coordinator for pupils who have special educational needs or disability (SENCo) very successfully oversees all the additional help provided to pupils in both this school and the federated infant school. In this capacity, she ensures that pupils who are effectively supported at the federated infant school go on to receive the same level and type of additional help when they join this school. The progress that pupils with additional needs make in their literacy and numeracy interventions is very good. It is indicated in their scores in the tests taken at the start and end of interventions, which provide the SENCo with a detailed and accurate picture of their progress. This is used to pinpoint very specifically if any areas remain weak.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. It has been very carefully planned so that pupils are given opportunities to study humanities and science in depth, as well as gaining the key literacy and numeracy skills for success in tests and examinations. Planning in humanities and science is very effective because pupils' subject knowledge is very well developed through, for example, additional website resources and carefully planned trips. This helps pupils cope better with the challenge of studying a range of subjects at secondary school.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils have well thought out opportunities to develop their creative skills through a combination of additional clubs as well as workshops within the school day. As a result, the school received the Arts Council England's Artsmark Gold award last year and is on track to achieve it again in 2016.
- The promotion of social, spiritual, moral and cultural education is excellent because it is effectively threaded throughout the curriculum and supported by inspiring assemblies, displays that celebrate the diversity of the pupil body, and the school's own 'PROUD' mantra. This mantra ties in very well with promoting British values because it emphasises respecting others and being open-minded. An indication of the school's strength in this area is the award the school has gained for the way it promotes human rights.
- The sports premium funding has been very well used to develop pupils' talents and enjoyment of physical education (PE). As a result, the school recently achieved the 'PE Quality Mark' with distinction. Pupils benefit from regular, frequent and high-quality PE teaching as well as well-run sports clubs (with the specialist equipment required). These clubs are well attended and have enabled pupils to reach county level in a number of sports, thus making a substantial contribution to the school's success culture.
- The support provided by the local authority made a strong contribution to ensuring that federation with the infant school was smooth. More recent support has been 'light touch' and focused on developing approaches to teaching. As a result of the school's success, the headteacher is part of the team of successful leaders that is used by the authority to help local schools improve.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance has improved greatly since the previous inspection. In 2014, governors successfully supported the school in federating with a nearby infant school. Since the collaboration, governors make much better use of information on pupils' progress to evaluate how well the school is doing, including how successful the federation is.
  - Some governors have significant and useful professional knowledge, notably those in the leadership team of the local secondary school. They have used their expertise very well to challenge the school, for example, over the way it spends its additional pupil premium funding. This has caused the school to sharpen the way it evaluates the impact of this funding to show governors that their decisions about how to spend the funding are well judged.
  - The dedicated safeguarding governor has had a very positive impact and provided the right balance of challenge and support. He visited the school regularly and checked policies and procedures, reporting back in detail at full governing body meetings. A new safeguarding governor has recently been appointed and good plans are in place to ensure that the previous incumbent's strong practice continues.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective because the designated leader (the deputy headteacher responsible for behaviour and attendance) also effectively leads safeguarding and behaviour in the nearby federated infant school. She therefore knows the area, the pupils and their families very well. She has made very good use of her local knowledge to identify the issues that are causing greatest concern in the locality, and has ensured that pupils receive relevant support and information by, for example, including a programme of lessons on domestic violence as part of personal development lessons.

- The safeguarding leader has ensured that her highly efficient and detailed approaches to record keeping are common across the federation. She works in very close and effective collaboration with the local authority and has a tenacious approach to following up the referrals she makes to social care services.
- The safeguarding leader has undertaken instruction in how to deliver quality safeguarding training. She has used her skills very well to train staff in child protection, covering issues such as how to spot and prevent pupils being radicalised, and identifying those at risk of female genital mutilation. This means the staff have the information and guidance they require to provide appropriate and high-quality support for the pupils in their care, should they need it.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding**

- Pupils make exceptionally strong progress because teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good and some is outstanding.
- Teachers plan learning carefully, using agreed approaches very effectively. Where necessary, they confidently and successfully tailor their approaches to ensure that they meet the needs of the group: for example, by demonstrating to pupils who struggle in mathematics how much they can learn from their mistakes.
- No time is lost in lessons and pupils have very good learning habits. For example, teachers efficiently train pupils in how to make notes for themselves while the teacher explains an idea or concept. They use these notes very well to help them complete tasks successfully. This supports pupils' strong progress.
- The teaching of reading is effective because it is highly systematic and enables those who enter the school with poor phonics (the sounds that letters make) knowledge to gain the basic skills they need quickly.
- Most-able readers are well served because they are taught how to interpret texts and infer. Pupils respond very well to images that teachers introduce to enable them to gain confidence in interpreting and inferring. They successfully transfer these higher-level skills to written texts.
- The teaching of humanities and science is highly effective. Pupils gain deep subject knowledge because teachers proficiently impart their strong subject knowledge to pupils. They set pupils written tasks which provide them with the chance to exhibit their new-found knowledge. For instance, pupils' books show that they are given the chance to develop their ability to cultivate the written style of historians and geographers by writing articles and reports. Pupils' enthusiasm is enhanced by learning-focused trips.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics enable pupils to gain the deeper levels of understanding and the fluency needed to achieve highly. Following sharp checks, the responsible leader identified that pupils' mathematical reasoning skills were not as well developed as other skills. To improve them, she introduced special reasoning questions across the school. These questions require pupils to use the answer from one question or problem in the next one. They provide an effective framework and have enhanced pupils' mathematical reasoning skills.
- Teachers carefully and rigorously monitor the progress pupils make to ensure that they are placed in the appropriate teaching group where the pace of learning and level of work is sufficiently demanding. Following teachers' regular checks, changes are made to ensure that pupils are placed in the highest group possible. This motivates pupils to achieve highly.
- Pupils' progress in writing is very strong. Pupils keep the same book for their assessed writing from joining the school to leaving. These books show how much pupils develop as writers, particularly their ability to employ key grammatical knowledge accurately, to structure their writing well and to express their ideas articulately.
- Teachers provide pupils with detailed feedback on their work with a very high degree of consistency. Pupils make very good use of teachers' comments to guide them in their next piece of work. Teachers robustly challenge pupils to write more neatly on occasions when in their rush to get their ideas down, the standard of their handwriting slips. Nevertheless, not all pupils' handwriting is, as yet, in line with the school's policy.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. The school successfully develops its pupils academically, socially and emotionally. Consequently, they are thoughtful and caring, and value the opportunities for learning the school provides.
- Pupils are demonstrably excited by their lessons and eagerly carry out the tasks teachers set. Pupils' excitement for learning is a source of energy in the school. It has been cultivated and enhanced by the enthusiasm for learning and ambition displayed by the school's teachers and leaders.
- Teachers insist that pupils follow the school's routines and its strong code of conduct. This has created a very orderly but nevertheless very nurturing environment. Pupils are crystal clear about what they need to do and why it matters. This means that pupils seamlessly move to different rooms for their lessons, work very well when collaborating in pairs and very rarely disrupt learning.
- Pupils champion their school because it enables them to blossom. They appreciate the diversity within the pupil body, one commenting, 'We may be different but we are all brothers and sisters here.'
- This sense of pride has been fostered by teachers and leaders. No opportunity is lost to reinforce the school's 'PROUD' code. Teachers actively make links with this in lessons and in assemblies, and explicitly model and teach the types of attitudes, behaviour and conduct that are embodied by the code.
- The school has developed the leadership skills of its pupils through using sports funding to enable pupils to become trained sports leaders, and by developing pupils' advocacy skills. Pupils effectively share their opinions on how to improve the school via the very well-functioning school council. One pupil commented to inspectors, 'The school council is the string that ties the teachers to the pupils.'

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They display excellent conduct both within class and around the school, and are very courteous to staff, each other and visitors.
- This is a harmonious school. There are very few incidents of bullying and all pupils spoken with agreed that teachers deal with bullying swiftly, fairly and effectively. A team of well-trained pupils known as 'the playground squad' provide support at playtimes, including initiating sensible playground games. As a result, despite hailing from diverse communities, pupils mix very well and behaviour during playtimes is excellent.
- Pupils attend very well and attendance is above average. The federation with the infant school means that leaders know parents very well. On a very small number of occasions in the past, to support parents in ensuring that their youngsters come to school, pastoral leaders have collected pupils from home and brought them to school. This has been very effective in deterring pupils from taking unnecessary time off school.

## Outcomes for pupils are outstanding

- Pupils join the school with attainment that is slightly below average. The vast majority make very strong progress while at the school and as a result in 2015 pupils' attainment was significantly above average.
- There was a dip in pupils' progress in reading shown in published information for 2015. Pupils did not make as much progress as they did the previous year. The dip was due to the fact that most-able pupils did not make as strong progress as they did in 2014. However, lower and middle ability pupils made well-above-average progress. Leaders have thoroughly analysed the reasons for the dip and have taken robust action, indicating that lessons have been learned well. Pupils' work in their books, their mock test results, and the standards pupils reach in their classwork show that they are making strong progress in reading. Consequently, pupils' attainment in reading is set to rise in 2016 examinations.
- Due to a relentless focus on ensuring that pupils make the rapid progress needed to achieve good results, pupils' attainment rose in 2015 when compared with 2014. In 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 rose so that it was above average in the combined score for reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 and above in 2015 was above average in writing and in English grammar, punctuation and spelling. In 2015, pupils achieved significantly better in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test than they did in 2014.

- Due to highly effective teaching and support, pupils' progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in 2015 was significantly above that of other pupils nationally in mathematics, and writing. Least-able and disadvantaged pupils also made very strong progress in 2015 tests and assessments compared to pupils nationally with similar starting points.
- Careful and effective use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has enabled a high proportion of this group to make strong progress from their starting points. In a number of subjects, their progress has been better than their classmates as well as other pupils nationally. For example, a high percentage of disadvantaged pupils who entered the school with lower than average starting points made strong or very strong progress in 2015 in reading. They outperformed other pupils nationally with similar starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school now measures pupils' current progress in terms of how well they are progressing towards age-related expectations. The information from the school's tracking shows that, in most year groups, the majority of pupils will meet their challenging end-of-year target of '8 steps progress'. This is especially true for Year 5 pupils because they entered the school with lower scores and have been given additional help so the majority have caught up and are now closer to where they should be. The information also shows that, in all classes, pupils have made strong progress since the start of the school year.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability do very well in the additional lessons they receive. They are tested at the start and the end of the programme of extra tuition to ensure that the small steps they make in their learning are recorded. They are making good progress in their learning, especially in reading, where they make the same good progress towards their challenging end-of-year targets as other pupils in the school with similar starting points.
- Most-able pupils in 2015 made slightly lower than average progress in reading and there was also a gap between most-able disadvantaged readers' progress and other pupils nationally. The school investigated this and found that a significant number of most-able disadvantaged pupils had significant personal challenges, including illness. Current information indicates that this group is making stronger progress this year.
- Most-able disadvantaged pupils made very strong progress in mathematics in 2015. Due to highly effective teaching, the proportion making expected progress was above average when compared to others nationally.
- In 2015, additional funding for disadvantaged pupils was used successfully to subsidise a holiday camp, which focused on ensuring this group of pupils gained a firmer grasp of the technical aspects of writing. Consequently, an above average proportion of disadvantaged pupils made expected and greater than expected progress in writing compared with others nationally. This approach also supported most-able disadvantaged writers. In addition, successful approaches to teaching grammar led to a rise in the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving level 5 in the English grammar, punctuation and spelling test in 2015.
- The progress of most-able pupils currently in school is carefully tracked and over 60% in the current Year 6 are now exceeding age-related expectations. Those who have not yet reached this standard are close to it and it is fully expected that they will achieve it, given the additional guidance and support they are receiving. The school works effectively with partner schools to ensure that its standards are in line with those of other local schools.
- The school has an increasing number of pupils who join the school after Year 3, a high proportion of whom are pupils whose first language is not English. These pupils make good progress because they are taught how to read as a priority and quickly learn reading skills through the phonics reading sessions. They are consequently able to access learning in other subjects.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110365
<b>Local authority</b>	Milton Keynes
<b>Inspection number</b>	10003475

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	251
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Anne Slee
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Helen Nicholson
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 221242
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stantonschool.co.uk">www.stantonschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@stantonschoolmk.org.uk">admin@stantonschoolmk.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13–14 January 2011

## Information about this school

- Stanton School is slightly smaller than average for a primary school.
- The school is in a 'hard' federation with the nearby Pepper Hill School. The two schools share a headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in the staffing at Stanton School, including a new Chair of the Governing Body.
- Just under 60% of pupils are White British. Just under one third of pupils' first language is thought to be other than English, which is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding is well above average. Just over half the pupils in the school are eligible for this additional funding. The pupil premium is extra government funding to support the education of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- There is a before-school breakfast club that is operated by the school.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which are minimum expectations for progress and attainment.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning during lessons in each class. Shorter visits were made to observe the teaching of reading in ability groups across the school, and on a separate occasion to see the teaching of mathematics. There were also short visits made to observe teaching in science and humanities. Pupils were also observed in assembly, at breaktimes and around the school.
- The team met formally with a group of pupils, and spoke to many others informally. Pupils in Years 3, 5 and 6 were heard to read.
- The school's leaders conducted a book scrutiny with inspectors.
- Inspectors examined a variety of documentation, particularly that related to pupils' progress, the school's own evaluations and how the school keeps pupils safe.
- The team held separate meetings with a group of staff and teaching assistants, middle leaders, including the leaders responsible for reading, writing and mathematics, the designated safeguarding leader who is also the deputy headteacher, the inclusion manager and two members of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body. An inspector also met with a representative of the local authority. Two phone calls were made to members of the governing body who have recently ceased serving.
- The team took note of 23 replies to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and studied the written comments that parents made online. The results of 22 returns from a survey of staff opinion were considered.

## Inspection team

Sarah Hubbard, lead inspector

Christopher Crouch

Raphael Moss

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2016

