

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Denys Primary School

Dundee Road, St Denys, Southampton, Hampshire SO17 2ND

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 April 2025

Outcome

St Denys Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are immensely proud of their school. They arrive at the start of the day brimming with enthusiasm and excitement. Everyone is welcome at this school. Staff greet pupils and their families with warmth. This reflects the school's inclusive approach.

The school sets high expectations for pupils' behaviour and academic outcomes. Most pupils achieve well. Staff know pupils well and use their knowledge to skilfully support them with their learning. The school's behaviour approach is shaped by its learning powers and the 'St Denys Way'. Pupils behave well and show respect to each other and school staff. They are polite and kind in their interactions. In lessons, pupils listen and contribute well. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, they enjoy playing games with friends and exploring the school's safari area.

Parents and carers enthuse about the school. They praise its caring ethos and the way their children are supported with their academic and social development. Parents enjoy sharing the celebration of pupils' achievements through the display boards in the school playground. One parent summed up the views of many by saying, 'You really do feel the St Denys Primary School embrace.'

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

The school has an ambitious curriculum which sets out learning in every subject from the early years to Year 6. Pupils accumulate the knowledge and skills they need at each stage of their education. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have their needs identified quickly and are supported appropriately to access the full curriculum and achieve well. Pupils who need extra help receive it through a targeted

approach which allows them to be prepared for new learning. Pupils who attend the school's 'Life Skills Group' are supported well with their emotional and social development.

Pupils become confident and skilled readers. This is because the school ensures that the teaching of reading is at the heart of the curriculum. This begins with a focus on children learning letters and the sounds they make. Pupils enjoy joining in with their phonics rhymes and songs. They apply this growing knowledge to their reading and writing. Staff share their reading choices and demonstrate positive reading habits. Pupils make the most of the many opportunities to read. Families appreciate their visits to the school's library, where they can share books with their children.

The school ensures that teachers are supported well with their subject knowledge. They emphasise subject-specific vocabulary, so that pupils use it accurately. For example, in English pupils demonstrate their understanding of grammatical terms. Staff use a range of approaches to help pupils to remember their learning. Teachers demonstrate what successful learning looks like and give pupils time to practise their new skills. However, there are occasions when activities and tasks do not contribute well enough to pupils' learning. This means they do not learn as much as they could.

Pupils benefit from a wealth of opportunities to discuss their learning. When working with their talk partners or as part of a small group, they listen to each other and present their views and opinions articulately. This helps them to deepen and develop their learning. Teachers address any misconceptions appropriately. They use resources and visual representations well to support pupils with their learning.

The school sets high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well because they know exactly what is expected of them. They know the meaning of the school's learning powers and why they matter. Year 6 ambassadors are proud to act as role models to others. Pupils value many opportunities to assume leadership roles and to contribute to school decisions. For example, the school council were delighted to have organised a successful talent show and a bake sale to raise funds for playtime equipment.

The school carefully considers pupils' personal development. Through the school's 'passport for learning' and class dashboards, pupils experience activities which develop their life skills and cultural understanding. Pupils enthuse about their trips to a nearby zoo and planetarium, linking this to their science learning. The school's curriculum for personal, social and health education helps pupils to learn the importance of being physically and mentally healthy. They know how to recognise when they or others need help, and they are confident to ask for it.

The members of the governing body have an accurate view of the school. They use this information to support and challenge school leaders appropriately. Staff feel very well supported and are proud to be part of the St Denys team. They appreciate being able to collaborate with other local schools to support their professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, learning tasks and activities are not designed well enough to allow pupils to achieve the intended learning. This means that some pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school should support teachers to design effective tasks which allow the curriculum aims to be achieved by all pupils.

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 April 2015.

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	116102
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10341405
Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jo Gaul
Headteacher	Billy Davies
Website	www.stdenysprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any 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 this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior staff at the school and representatives from the governing body and the local authority.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.

- The inspector evaluated responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and spoke to pupils to gather their views.
- The inspector analysed responses to Ofsted's staff survey and spoke to staff about their views of the school.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View and any additional free-text responses. They also spoke with some parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Kate Fripp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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