

# Inspection of Stifford Clays Primary School

Whitmore Avenue, Stifford Clays, Grays, Essex RM16 2ST

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Inspection dates: 11 and 12 October 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils love coming to school. They are polite, courteous and grow into respectful young people. Pupils celebrate the differences between themselves and each other. They know it is ok to be themselves in school. The culture of mutual respect between everyone in school shines through.

Pupils have many and varied opportunities to discover the world outside of Stifford Clays. These opportunities, such as visits to universities, raising funds for local charities and performing at the Royal Opera House, contribute well to preparing pupils to be active citizens of the future. Pupils are well supported to become resilient when faced with challenges.

Pupils behave extremely well. They know what adults expect of them and live up to these high expectations. Pupils know how to manage their emotions. This means if they feel sad or angry, they know what they can do to start to feel calm or happy again. Bullying is rare. When it happens, adults are quick to put a stop to it and provide support for everyone involved.

Pupils are safe in school. Children in the Nursery are well cared for, including children who are two years old. These very young children benefit from a nurturing environment, supported by skilled adults.

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

Pupils, staff and trustees show great pride in belonging to the Stifford Clays Primary School community. Leaders' collective efforts to bring about improvement since the previous inspection have paid great dividends. They have galvanised the team of staff, working together to set high expectations, which pupils now strive to meet.

Pupils learn well. In many subjects they develop detailed knowledge because teachers explain new concepts clearly. They provide pupils with carefully designed activities to help them practise and apply their new learning. Teachers make regular checks to ensure pupils remember their new knowledge. Pupils with special educational need and/or disabilities ) learn well. Adults adapt activities to make sure they meet the needs of these pupils. They learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Where leaders have recently made changes to the curriculum in a small number of subjects, pupils have not yet developed the rich and detailed knowledge as they do in most other subjects.

Reading sits at the heart of the curriculum. The youngest pupils learn to read well. Most go on to become fluent and confident readers. This means older pupils can read books for pleasure, especially in the 'drop everything and read' time each day. Adults are skilled at supporting pupils who need extra support with reading. Pupils read books that help them practise the precise sounds they are learning in class. This helps them to catch up quickly.

Leaders' vision to make sure pupils are well rounded members of the community is being realised. Pupils have access to many different opportunities. Pupils get to hear from police officers, solicitors and scientists, among others, to find out about different jobs. Pupils can apply to become 'mini cultural champions', apply to be on the school council or represent the school in a particular sporting competition. These well-planned opportunities mean pupils receive high-quality provision to develop personally.

There is a calm and relaxed environment in school. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. This includes pupils who attend the specialist provision. Pupils who attend the specialist resource base provision have their needs well met. They join in the wider life of the school, for example, when they join their peers in visiting the tuckshop on a Friday to purchase their snack.

Staff are well trained. They receive high-quality training to help them carry out their roles. As a result, teachers' subject knowledge is strong. This means teachers can quickly identify if a pupil misunderstands a concept and correct them. Staff rightly value the support they receive from senior leaders.

Trustees scrutinise leaders' work diligently. They receive useful information from leaders about different aspects of the school, then make appropriate checks to see for themselves. Trustees provide highly effective support for leaders, but do not shy away from challenging them to continue to make the school even better.

Children in the Nursery classes receive high-quality provision. Adults know the importance of helping children to learn and use many new words. They do this skilfully. They take every opportunity to talk with children, asking them questions and modelling language use. The extensive outdoor area provides a wonderful space for children to develop their physical skills, through digging, climbing and running.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture where protecting pupils is their very top priority. They are tenacious in ensuring pupils who need extra support receive the right help from the right service. Often, this help comes from skilled adults in school, who support pupils' well-being extremely well. Leaders' records of concerns are detailed. Systems and processes are strong. This helps to ensure concerns are not missed.

Pupils themselves know how to stay safe, especially when using the internet. For example, older pupils are clear on the signs to look out for to check they are not 'scammed' online.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, curriculum plans are new and have not been fully implemented. This means that, in these subjects, pupils do not have the same detailed knowledge as they do in the rest of the curriculum. Leaders should support teachers to fully implement the curriculum, so that pupils can achieve well across all subjects.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	141877
<b>Local authority</b>	Thurrock
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240982
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	649
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Vivienne Northall
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Christina Pumfrey
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stiffordclays.org.uk/">www.stiffordclays.org.uk/</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	24 and 25 September 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The executive headteacher leads two other primary schools in the South West Essex Community Education Trust
- The school has a nursery for two- and three-year-olds.
- The school runs an onsite specialist resource base provision unit for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. This provision opened in June 2022 and currently has 10 pupils on roll.

## 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, art and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with

subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, 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 listened to pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to an adult.

- Inspectors evaluated the curriculum plans and spoke to leaders and pupils about several other subjects. Inspectors made several visits to the Nursery classes and the specialist resource base.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school, special educational needs coordinator, early years leader and groups of teaching assistants and midday assistants.
- The lead inspector met with two trustees, including the chair of trustees and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record, reviewed safeguarding paperwork and systems. Inspectors spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff, trustees and pupils.
- Inspectors considered the 67 responses and free-text comments to Ofsted's questionnaire for parents, the 60 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff and 53 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for pupils. One inspector spoke to several parents at the start of the second day of the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Mike Wade	Ofsted Inspector
Bozena Laraway	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Cox	Ofsted Inspector

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