

Stoke Damerel Primary Academy

Address: Collingwood Road, Stoke, Plymouth, Devon, PL1 5PA

Unique reference number (URN): 144843

Inspection report: 17 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✔ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- Met: The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- Not met: The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Early years

Strong standard ●

Children in the Reception Year get off to an excellent start. Parents are included in their children's learning, for example they are invited to experience outdoor learning through 'forest school'. Teaching is clear and highly stimulating. Opportunities for children to try out their developing knowledge are planned with precision. Staff encourage and question the children skilfully. The teaching of phonics is highly effective. Pupils go on to achieve above average outcomes in Year 1. Children's knowledge across other areas of learning, such as expressive arts and design, is well developed. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development continues to rise and is above the national average.

Leaders are sharply focused on any gaps in children's learning. Checks on speech, language and communication are precise. Early identification of children's needs and targeted support mean that gaps do not persist. Leaders have identified that children's early writing development may not always keep pace with their rapidly improving reading skills. Staff are tackling this head on to bring writing along quickly, including through play. As children prepare for key stage 1, the staff who know the children best work alongside those who will teach them in Year 1. This means that teachers know exactly what each child still needs to learn and how best to support them.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

In 2025, there was a marked improvement in pupils' attainment in the end of key stage 2 tests. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, were especially successful in writing. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and their non-disadvantaged peers also narrowed in both reading and mathematics. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development in the early years and meeting the expected standards in phonics and the multiplication check is high. Leaders are rightly looking to build on these achievements so that pupils secure outcomes that are consistently above the national average in key stage 2.

Staff are sharply focused on helping pupils to secure the building blocks of literacy, including spoken language, and numeracy, in every corner of the school. This sets pupils up well for secondary school. Pupils' knowledge is weaker in some subjects of the wider curriculum, where their understanding and work lack depth and they struggle to carry their learning with them into later topics.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard ●

Leaders and staff work together on a rigorous cycle of checking on and intervening when pupils' attendance begins to dip. The school provides significant support and flexibility to help families who struggle to get their children into school to overcome any barriers. Pupils' overall attendance is currently above the national average. Attendance among

disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is close to average. The school is having success reducing the rate of persistent absence for these pupils.

Typically, pupils behave well, showing willingness to learn. Pupils' successes are celebrated at every turn, whether this be rewards for consistently positive behaviour or high-quality work. Expectations of behaviour are clear. Where pupils struggle to meet these expectations, leaders and staff spend time helping them to reflect and improve. Many pupils, including those with SEND, looked-after children and those with other disadvantages, make notable improvements to their behaviour over time thanks to the school's adaptive and understanding approach.

Nonetheless, leaders do not always have the full picture of pupils' day-to-day experience of behaviour standards across the school. Although relationships and the conditions in classrooms are generally positive, pupils continue to notice disruption and unkind behaviours at times.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard ●

The teaching of phonics is highly effective. Leaders have sought to bring similar approaches to other subjects. As a result, there are well-established routines in reading, including vocabulary, writing and mathematics, which pupils follow confidently. Handwriting is a core part of school life. Pupils of all ages practise this daily. Teaching is sharply focused on any weaknesses or common lapses across each class. This has led to a consistently high standard of handwriting across the school.

Teachers are well versed in a range of approaches to help pupils with barriers to learn successfully. Where one or two pupils benefit from a particular kind of support, this is extended to the whole class. This helps any pupil who might struggle with some curriculum content to have the best chance of grasping it. Pupils receive the teaching they need to become secure in both literacy and numeracy.

In recent years, leaders have acted to ensure that pupils follow a well-planned curriculum in each subject. There are regular checks to see how well pupils have learned each topic. In some subjects, however, pupils do not engage as well with the topics, and teaching does not help them to remember what they have learned over time. The checks that are made do not help leaders to understand the depth of pupils' understanding.

Inclusion

Expected standard ●

Leaders have worked productively with the local authority to develop a tiered approach to support across the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those with other barriers to learning, receive teaching that focuses on the stage they are at, rather than the curriculum for their age group.

Any gaps in the development of children's speech, language and communication skills are identified and addressed quickly in the early years. The school has developed a small-class provision called The Bird's Nest. Here, pupils receive specialist support to develop their communication, language and attention skills. Leaders bring experts from within the local

education community into the school to provide staff with the expertise they need to meet pupils' needs effectively.

The individual progress of disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care is monitored. Where appropriate, the school acts quickly to secure education, health and care plans, helping families to understand their child's needs and what helps them. Although the school makes regular checks on pupils' learning and progress, there is sometimes a lack of precision in the way that support is planned. Leaders have a general understanding of the barriers disadvantaged pupils face, but there is a lack of rigour when evaluating the impact of the support provided over time.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have brought about clear improvements to the curriculum and teaching in English and mathematics. The impact of this work can be seen in the successes that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, had in the end of key stage 2 tests in 2025. Across the school, leaders have created the conditions for pupils to achieve well. For example, most pupils now attend very well and those with barriers such as special educational needs and/or disabilities receive effective support.

Recent changes to the way that leadership is organised at the trust mean that the school has access to the advice and expertise it needs to drive ongoing improvements. Trust leaders encourage the school to evaluate the impact for pupils regularly. Nonetheless, in some aspects of the school's work, such as the wider curriculum and pupils' behaviour, the school has not built a full picture of pupils' experiences. Consequently, leaders have not identified precisely which aspects of school life could be strengthened further for best effect.

Leaders' partnership working is a real strength. Many parents are highly complimentary about the way the school is led. Staff feel supported and receive the specialist training they need to be effective in their roles. They have confidence in the direction of travel, due to the collaborative approach that the school's leaders take. The local governing body is committed to supporting the school to be fully inclusive for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or other challenging personal circumstances.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

The school provides a full curriculum that helps pupils to keep themselves safe in relationships, online and in the community. The curriculum aims to build a sophisticated understanding of different religions and people who have challenged society at different times through history. These aspects of the curriculum are taught with mixed success. Pupils do not always remember or understand their learning well. This can make it tricky for pupils to be successful in learning more difficult concepts that come later.

In the early years, children develop high levels of independence and self-control for their age. Throughout the school, teaching approaches are designed to put the onus on pupils to direct aspects of their learning. Pupils are encouraged to make a positive difference to others, for example through roles on the school or 'eco' councils. Year 6 play leaders make a real difference to the fun that the rest of the school has on the playground at lunchtime.

Pupils have a well-developed understanding of important British values and laws. They confidently explain how people do not need to be the same to have equal rights. Some pupils are invited to be part of the school's 'Equity Council' based on their individual characteristics. The profile of this is growing within the school as the group works with staff to ensure that the school's displays represent everyone.

The school sets out to provide an enriching set of opportunities to each pupil, overcoming any barriers or disadvantages. Leaders have begun to track this closely so that they can be sure that each child benefits fully. The school provides valued support and opportunities for service children. These pupils enjoyed a visit to the cinema together and led on the sale of poppies to support Remembrance. Families told inspectors how much they appreciate the school's flexibility and pastoral care when supporting service children through changes in their lives.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Whatever their starting points, children and pupils become successful readers and writers at this school. Pupils read and write for pleasure and look forward to receiving books as rewards. Pupils describe how the school gives everyone the support they need with their learning. They see that the school has developed provisions, such as The Bird's Nest, so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get the right support.

Behaviour around the school and in class is usually settled, allowing for focused learning and enjoyable play. There are clear rules in place. Those who follow the rules consistently are recognised for their efforts. Pupils who struggle to meet the school's high expectations of behaviour benefit from adaptations and support. There are many examples of pupils with vulnerabilities and significant barriers to their learning who have improved their behaviour over time at this school. The school identifies any bullying quickly and acts decisively to restore pupils' feelings of safety and emotional wellbeing.

Children in the early years show great independence and self-control, for example when practising their numbers up to 5 in small teams. Staff question pupils skilfully, drawing out their learning and providing lots of repetition. Great care is taken to ensure that the gains made in the early years are built on successfully in Year 1.

The life of the school is a busy one. The school aims for each and every pupil to have 11 key experiences during their time at the school. This includes, for example, a trip to the local library and a residential visit, such as to Dartmoor. Pupils get involved in leadership teams and committees. A team of play leaders from Year 6 behaves as a well-oiled machine, ensuring safe play that includes everyone at lunchtime.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen the oversight of the support planned for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, so that their experiences

and outcomes are monitored rigorously.

- Leaders should refine the design of the curriculum, encouraging pupils to further deepen their learning in the subjects of the wider curriculum, including personal, social and health education.
 - Leaders should choose from the best information available to them to support their evaluation of what works well and what could be improved for different groups of pupils, and use this to direct their ongoing improvement work.
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About this inspection

This school is part of Reach South multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Tom Leverage, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Marcus Agius.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the CEO, 3 members of the trust improvement team and 3 members of the local governing board, including the chair of governors.

Headteacher: Annie Blackie

Lead inspector:

Lydia Pride, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sophie Laing, Ofsted Inspector

James Taylor, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 17 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

399

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

420

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

24.56%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

3.76%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

13.28%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	61%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	65%	62%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	62%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	57%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	71%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	72%	75%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	70%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	72%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	79%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	85%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	73%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	75%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	73%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	47%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	59%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	44%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	37%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	58%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	59%	63%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	56%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	58%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	68%	59%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	82%	59%	Above
2023/24 (final)	56%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	66%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	77%	61%	Above
2023/24 (final)	56%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	63%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	47%	68%	-20 pp
2024/25 (revised)	59%	69%	-10 pp
2023/24 (final)	44%	67%	-23 pp
2022/23 (final)	37%	66%	-29 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	58%	80%	-22 pp
2024/25 (revised)	59%	81%	-22 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	80%	-24 pp
2022/23 (final)	58%	78%	-20 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	68%	78%	-10 pp
2024/25 (revised)	82%	78%	4 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	78%	-22 pp
2022/23 (final)	63%	77%	-14 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	66%	80%	-14 pp
2024/25 (revised)	77%	81%	-3 pp
2023/24 (final)	56%	79%	-24 pp
2022/23 (final)	63%	79%	-16 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	4.4%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	5.8%	5.5%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	5.5%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	9.7%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	17.8%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	14.5%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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