

South Stoke Primary School

Address: The Street, South Stoke, Oxfordshire, RG8 0JS

Unique reference number (URN): 123039

Inspection report: 24 February 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.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Attendance data fluctuates due to the nature and context of very small cohorts. Leaders analyse attendance carefully and act quickly when patterns change, including when pupils fall below the school's expectations. Improved communication with families has reduced term-time holidays, and a strengthened administrative role has made systems more robust. Pupils enjoy school and arrive punctually. Leaders' actions to support this are contributing towards attendance rising over time. Tailored support, including for pupils with medical needs, is helping individuals attend more often and continue learning when they cannot be in school.

Behaviour across the school is consistently positive because pupils understand what is expected of them and want to meet those expectations. Warm, respectful relationships shape the calm, purposeful atmosphere. Staff know pupils well. Pupils describe the school as a kind place where they feel happy and safe. In lessons, pupils listen, stay focused and respond promptly when they need a reminder. They take pride in their work and show increasing independence. Social spaces are orderly and inclusive, with older and younger pupils playing confidently together. Pupils consider that behaviour has improved, bullying does not occur, and if it did staff would deal with it quickly.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders have established a highly inclusive culture where pupils' needs are identified and met quickly. Staff know pupils well and respond appropriately to their individual needs, creating warm, respectful relationships that help pupils feel calm, safe and understood. Many pupils arrive with significant needs, including some who have experienced disrupted education prior to joining the school. They thrive in an environment where sensory needs are met, routines are clear and resources promote independence. Families value the school's small size, nurturing ethos and regular communication.

Actions to support pupils are increasingly precise and align closely with their education, health and care plans, where appropriate. For example, staff use practical strategies, language scaffolds and targeted interventions to help pupils keep up with the curriculum. Staff adapt their teaching with increasing consistency, changing their approach as pupils' needs develop. Leaders' systems for evaluating the impact of interventions continue to strengthen.

A well-structured approach to design, implement and review support for pupils underpins provision. Staff training is purposeful and reflected in the quality of adaptations made to support pupils' learning. Support staff play a valuable role in monitoring progress. Leaders work effectively with external professionals, including specialist advisors and the local authority, to refine provision. Pastoral care is a strength of this school.

Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils benefit from the same offer as their non-disadvantaged peers and are well supported in school.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders maintain a clear understanding of the school's unique context and the progress made over time. Decisive governance has ensured stability, including the appointment of an interim headteacher who works closely with leaders at all levels. This cohesive approach is recognised by those associated with the school, who note the recent positive shift in culture and direction of the school.

Leaders evaluate the school accurately. They highlight what is working well and identify priorities with precision. Successes are celebrated, with improvement remaining central to their work. Governors are shaping a refreshed vision with stakeholders, ensuring pupils' needs and aspirations guide every decision.

Governance provides purposeful support and challenge. Governors understand the school's journey and ensure leadership is guided with care and rigour. Leaders model high expectations and professionalism, promoting ambitious outcomes for all pupils.

Staff describe the school as a supportive and empowering place to work. They value the well-planned professional development on offer and speak positively about recent changes. Staff wellbeing is prioritised and reflected in daily practice. Relationships with parents and carers are warm and constructive. The school's role within the community continues to grow. Leaders engage well with other schools and networks to enhance provision further.

Professional development is thoughtfully designed and aligned with the school's priorities. External training strengthens staff expertise. Leaders check regularly that training has the intended impact on staff development. Staff demonstrate increased confidence and improved knowledge, particularly in meeting pupils' additional needs and supporting positive behaviour.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils develop a secure understanding of fundamental British values and talk confidently about democracy, the rule of law and how these principles shape expectations within the school. They explain clearly why rules matter and how voting is used to elect the school council. Pupils discuss these ideas with maturity and make thoughtful links to their own experiences.

Pupils demonstrate a clear awareness of how to keep themselves safe, including online, river and rail safety, and the importance of healthy friendships. They understand why protecting personal information matters and know how to report concerns. Pupils understand and can talk about the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

The recently introduced personal, social and health education curriculum is beginning to strengthen pupils' knowledge further. Pupils regularly learn about difference, respect and staying safe. While pupils speak confidently about friendships, safety and enrichment, their recall of some curriculum content, particularly other religions and different family structures, is less secure, especially for those pupils who join the school mid-year.

Enrichment experiences, such as visits to castles and palaces, as well as participation in the musical performances in London, help pupils to build confidence, teamwork and a sense of belonging. They enjoy the wider opportunities the school provides, including after-school clubs, sports activities and board-game sessions. Pupils learn to play a brass instrument and love the cooking club.

Overall, pupils feel safe, valued and part of a close community. They describe the school as friendly and kind. This is reflected in the positive relationships observed throughout the day. Staff know pupils well and notice small changes in their wellbeing. Pastoral support is a strength, with teaching assistants and additional nurture provision for those who need it. Reasonable adjustments and carefully considered adaptations ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils thrive.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

Pupils' achievement is variable across the school. Pupils on the whole progress well in reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes in phonics are often above the national average. In the wider curriculum, pupils' recall of prior learning is inconsistent. This is particularly the case for pupils who join mid-year and have gaps in learning. Some pupils explain prior learning clearly, while others struggle to remember key knowledge in the wider curriculum.

Published outcomes do not reflect pupils' achievement fully due to the school's small cohorts and each cohort's specific context. Many pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make suitable progress from their starting points and develop secure skills in the early stages of reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' work shows their learning of a broad curriculum over time. However, at times, learning activities do not help pupils to learn well or demonstrate progression in their work. Leaders are refining the curriculum content so pupils remember more over time and are better prepared for their next stage of education. This is particularly the case for those pupils who join mid-year and may already have gaps in their knowledge.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Leaders have implemented a well-sequenced curriculum. They are ambitious in their intent for pupils to experience a broad curriculum. Leaders have developed the curriculum in reading, writing and mathematics. However, in the wider curriculum, it is not clear precisely what knowledge and skills pupils must learn and remember. This makes it harder for teachers to check what pupils know.

Children in the early years make a positive start to their education and benefit from a well-designed curriculum. This enables children to learn new ideas at an age-appropriate level alongside their peers in key stage 1. Children build their knowledge as they progress through the early years. This prepares children well for the next stage in their education.

Teachers explain learning clearly and consistently. They are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. This is particularly the case in English and mathematics, where pupils learn the important early skills of reading, writing and mathematics with increasing rigour. On occasion, teaching activities in the wider curriculum are not designed well or their impact checked. As a result, some pupils in the mixed-aged classes do not keep up with the delivery of whole-class teaching activities.

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

Pupils describe this school as a place where they feel happy, known and valued. They arrive each morning to warm greetings and caring check-ins that help them settle quickly. From the early years onwards, children develop a sense of belonging and a love of learning. They play and learn together with ease, forming trusting relationships with staff who listen and respond when worries arise.

Classrooms are calm, purposeful spaces where pupils behave well and show pride in their work. They rise to meet the school's high expectations and treat one another with respect and compassion. When disagreements occur, pupils often resolve them independently. Bullying is rare, and pupils are confident that staff will act swiftly and fairly if concerns emerge.

Pupils enjoy a broad curriculum and show curiosity about new learning. The youngest children become increasingly fluent readers and use phonics confidently. Recent improvements are helping pupils learn more securely, although some gaps remain in their knowledge as new approaches to the curriculum and teaching continue to embed. Staff think carefully about how to reduce barriers so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, take part fully in lessons and wider activities.

The school's inclusive ethos is evident in every aspect of daily life. Pupils feel safe and understand how to stay safe, including online. Leadership roles give them meaningful opportunities to contribute to the school community. They talk proudly about helping younger pupils, supporting events and shaping school life.

Beyond lessons, pupils take part in enriching experiences such as museum visits, music events and practical activities, including cooking or learning a brass instrument. These opportunities broaden their interests and help them discover new talents. As they move through the school, pupils grow in confidence, resilience and ambition, leaving Year 6 ready for the next stage of their education.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the curriculum consistently identifies the precise knowledge and skills that pupils must learn as they progress through the school.

- Leaders should support staff to carefully design, select and sequence learning activities that help pupils to know and remember more across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should ensure that teachers develop skills to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge of the curriculum to enable pupils to achieve consistently well.
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About this inspection

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.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and representatives from local authority during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one unregistered alternative provision.

The acting headteacher has been in post since January 2025.

The school has a cohort of 24 pupils.

Headteacher: Nicola Townsend

Lead inspector:

Simon Woodbridge, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector:

Lea Hannam, 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 24 February 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

22

Well below 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

52

Well below 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)

18.18%

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

13.64%

Well above 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

27.27%

Well above average

What does this mean?

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

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below 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	35%	61%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	17%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	S	61%	S

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2022/23 (final)	43%	60%	Below

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)	50%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	S	74%	S
2022/23 (final)	100%	73%	Above

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	47%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	33%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	S	72%	S
2022/23 (final)	57%	71%	Below

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	53%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	50%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	S	73%	S
2022/23 (final)	57%	73%	Below

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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	S	46%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

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	S	62%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

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	S	59%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

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	S	60%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

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	S	68%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

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	S	80%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

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	S	78%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

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	S	80%	S
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been

mirrored and applied in the report card.

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)	11.9%	5.2%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	11.8%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	7.0%	5.9%	Above

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)	27.6%	13.3%	Above
2023/24 (3 term)	30.3%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	12.5%	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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