

Stopsley Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109553
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	377941
Inspection dates	6–7 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Sheridan HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	390
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Walker
Headteacher	Kim Hall
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed learning in 30 lessons taught by 16 teachers. Inspectors met with pupils, members of the governing body, representatives from the local authority, school leaders and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at policy documents, tracking data, notes from the local authority, work in pupils' books, school improvement planning and records of behaviour and incidents. Inspectors considered the views of staff, pupils and 96 parents and carers through returned questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- To what extent have the quality of teaching and the impact of the curriculum improved?
- Are all groups of learners catching up sufficiently well to eradicate previous underachievement?
- How effective are leaders at all levels at driving and sustaining school improvement?

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The range of ethnic groups represented in the school is wide and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. There are a few pupils from Traveller backgrounds. The largest ethnic group is White British, followed by pupils of other backgrounds, mainly from Eastern Europe. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who arrive or leave the school at times other than the normal transition points is high. A new headteacher took up the post in September 2011.

The school was previously inspected in November 2010 and given a notice to improve because it was performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. Inadequacies were identified in relation to pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and learning, the use of assessment data and the quality and range of curriculum provision for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.

The school accommodates a privately run breakfast and after-school club which is subject to separate inspection arrangements.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Pupils make a sound start in Early Years Foundation Stage. However, in Key Stages 1 and 2, much of the teaching remains inadequate and not enough is good. Standards of attainment have fallen since the last inspection and are low overall. Pupils from the different ethnic and cultural groups represented in the school perform similarly. However, last year, boys significantly outperformed girls in the end of Key Stage 2 tests and the school's data show that girls continue to underperform, particularly in mathematics. While the school collects data that show these trends, limited use is made of it in improving provision to help underperforming groups and individuals catch up.

Many lessons are uninspiring. As a consequence, pupils often lose interest and behaviour deteriorates. Pupils often find the work they are given unchallenging because teachers do not adapt their teaching sufficiently to extend and stretch pupils in line with their abilities. In some lessons, teachers' questions provide little challenge. Many teachers have insufficient subject knowledge in mathematics and do not plan appropriate steps to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers' marking does not help pupils to improve their work well enough. Opportunities for pupils who fall behind to catch up are insufficient. Guidance for the work of additional adults is often weak so their contribution to learning is limited. Behaviour management in some classes is poor and pupils are allowed to chatter and call out without being challenged. Some teachers appear oblivious to the noise and general disengagement in their classes. Similarly, behaviour at playtimes is at times over-boisterous and there are limited spaces for pupils to play quietly, away from more active games.

In the minority of lessons where good teaching is seen, pupils respond with enthusiasm. In these lessons, teachers use interesting subject matter to engage pupils fully in their learning. Work is well matched to different pupils' needs so they think hard to complete their tasks. In these lessons, teachers pose effective questions in their marking and in lessons to help pupils improve their work. Behaviour is much better because pupils are engaged in their learning and teachers

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maintain high expectations and challenge.

Pupils are generally polite and welcoming. They reflect well on the changes they are seeing and talk with maturity about the way that adults support them pastorally through, for example, assemblies that are helping them think about their behaviour. Pupils talk about the values, shared throughout school, that underpin the improvements they are making in their behaviour and attitudes to work.

The curriculum has improved and is satisfactory. All areas of the National Curriculum are adequately covered. Long-term plans show clear progression and resources have been provided, for example, in information and communication technology, so teachers are able to plan lessons that develop pupils' skills. Middle leaders monitor plans to ensure that their subjects are covered in sufficient breadth. However, the quality of coverage remains limited by the highly variable quality of teaching.

The headteacher has quickly identified the key weaknesses that are preventing the school moving forward and, along with the deputy headteacher, has started to take action. School self-evaluation is honest and astute. A good-quality action plan has been established which is accurately focused on the right areas for improvement. While this is starting to have an impact, it is yet to be fully effective because middle leadership is underdeveloped. Work with the local authority and a partner school has not been effective enough in developing middle leaders' understanding of their roles and responsibilities. As a result, senior leaders are stretched too far and, consequently, the capacity of leadership collectively is inadequate. The governing body has failed to effectively monitor and support the school. It relies too much on information provided by the school or the local authority and this has, at times, painted an overly optimistic view of the school's effectiveness.

Several staff members and parents and carers stated that the school has underperformed for a considerable time and are anxious to see sustainable improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment overall and particularly in mathematics so it is consistently above average and no group underachieves by:
 - ensuring that lessons are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities so they make consistently good progress and enjoy their learning
 - using tracking data more effectively to identify underperformance and provide high-quality intervention so pupils catch up quickly.

- Improve the quality of teaching so the majority of lessons lead to good achievement and behaviour by:
 - ensuring all teachers plan and teach learning activities for the full ability range in their class
 - developing teachers' questioning skills so they encourage pupils to think

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- deeply about their responses
 - developing marking so it consistently guides pupils to make improvements to their work
 - ensuring that additional adults are deployed effectively in lessons
 - developing teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of behaviour in class and on the playground by:
- ensuring all teachers have a full understanding of the school's strategies for promoting positive behaviour and apply them consistently
 - monitoring the effectiveness of all adults in promoting positive behaviour
 - regularly evaluating the effectiveness of behaviour management strategies
 - developing playground facilities so activities can be separated and pupils have quiet areas to play.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of middle managers and the governing body by:
- ensuring they understand their roles and take responsibility for the development of their areas
 - understanding and applying the strategies that highly effective governing bodies and middle managers use to monitor, evaluate and promote school improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Standards of attainment are low because, from starting points in line with expectations, many pupils fall behind in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar, erratic progress. In many lessons, pupils complete tasks quickly with little challenge and, in some of the weakest lessons, they take part in silly, distracting behaviour, often because they are bored. Pupils in these lessons told inspectors that the poor behaviour of some was not unusual. Where teaching is good, pupils thrive and demonstrate their potential with high-quality work, thoughtful analysis and eager responses. In several lessons, pupils were asked to evaluate their own work and compare it to that of their peers. Pupils skilfully made connections between their own work and that of others and, as a result, they were able to learn from each other and effectively improve their work.

Pupils say that they generally feel safe in school because they know adults there will help them if they have a problem. They talk knowledgeably about 'stranger danger' and the importance of staying safe on the road and when using the internet. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the recent assemblies on bullying. They say that, as a result, they are better equipped to deal with inappropriate behaviour and know what to do if they or someone else finds themselves in an uncomfortable situation. It is this kind of work and the increasingly broad curriculum that lead to pupils' satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils from different ethnic heritages and social backgrounds get on noticeably well in school and make similar progress in their work. Racist incidents are rare and dealt with effectively.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	4
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is too variable and far too many classes have consistently weak teaching. As a result, pupils fall behind in their learning and, because they lose interest, their behaviour deteriorates. Many teachers have limited subject knowledge and fail to recognise that some of the activities they give to pupils are inappropriate. In some classes, work is far too easy and pupils spend time chatting after they quickly finish.

The curriculum provides an adequate range of activities. Information and communication technology is used increasingly effectively to support learning and develop pupils' skills. Long-term plans are being followed so that each subject is allocated appropriate time. The impact of this provision is hindered by the quality of teaching.

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall. Potentially vulnerable pupils are provided with effective pastoral support. The family worker provides an effective range of services for parents and carers and pupils. Good links exist between the school and the local Traveller community. The school has been successful in maintaining average attendance. Pupils are clear that the school is helping them to improve their behaviour through the positive promotion of values, high staff ratios on the playground and opportunities to discuss the impact of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils say that adults in school care for them, although the

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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quality of support and guidance varies between classes.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The pace of change has not been quick enough since the school was given notice to improve last year. The governing body and other leaders, although provided with substantial support from the local authority and a partner school, have not brought about the necessary progress in the areas of most concern.

The new headteacher has set out a credible plan for eradicating deficiencies but this is very new and yet to prove effective. Middle leadership is underdeveloped and external support has not proved effective enough. As a consequence, too many of the day-to-day responsibilities for leading school improvement lie with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. This limits their ability to lead strategically and they too often find themselves managing problems rather than improving outcomes.

Leaders have worked hard to engage with parents and carers. Newsletters are regular and the website provides useful reference information. The family worker provides a further useful link. Several parents and carers commented on the early improvements seen and their hope for the future, although others expressed their ongoing concern about further changes in leadership and continuing inconsistencies in provision. Senior leaders recognise these concerns and share the frustration of some with the pace of change.

The school has started to identify the performance of different groups but is yet to effectively do anything with the information. As a consequence, there remains inequality in the achievement of girls and boys in some year groups. Because of this, the school does not effectively promote equality of opportunity.

The school is a cohesive community with pupils getting on noticeably well with each other. Pupils of different cultural heritages mix well, although there are limited opportunities in the curriculum to celebrate the full range of cultures represented in the school community. Safeguarding is satisfactory and all statutory duties are met.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Recent improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage mean that the children make satisfactory and improving progress. From starting points in line with the expectations for their age, children make satisfactory progress so they are ready for the next stage of their education when they reach Year 1. They enjoy the warm, harmonious environment where the good quality relationships between children and adults lead to productive learning through play and exploration. Behaviour is good because children know what is expected and they are keen to please. Children who speak English as an additional language are supported well so they make progress in line with their peers and effectively develop their use of English. Both the indoor and outdoor environments are used well and provide a range of stimulating experiences. However, much of the equipment used is old and tired-looking and this limits its attractiveness to the children. Early reading and letter sounds are taught well with children making good progress in this area. Children are appropriately challenged because assessment information is used to plan appropriate activities. Some imaginative opportunities are provided to capture children’s imagination. For example, they enjoyed learning about food and shopping in the role-play shop. Teachers enhanced this activity by placing real vegetables in the shop, which encouraged the children to participate with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

The Early Years Foundation Stage has benefited from some intensive support from the local authority consultants and this has helped the leaders to develop provision and improve outcomes. Leadership is satisfactory. Adults have a good understanding of the purposes of education for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and develop appropriate activities together. However, leaders are yet to make full use of assessment information to ensure they are providing equally for all groups. Appropriate action plans are in place.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers state that their children enjoy school and are kept safe. Several parents and carers commented on the variability in the quality of teaching and the behaviour of some pupils. Inspection evidence clearly shows that these concerns are justified. Several parents and carers expressed the view that the school had been underperforming for some time and they are concerned about the length of time it will take to overcome these weaknesses. Inspection evidence shows that the new headteacher has made a good start in identifying the issues and drawing up credible plans to move forward at a good pace. While the school is in special measures, Ofsted inspectors will visit the school regularly and publish reports on the progress it is making in overcoming weaknesses. Several parents and carers commented positively on the appointment of a permanent headteacher. A small number commented negatively about some of the decisions she has made. Inspection evidence shows that the headteacher has listened to parents' and carers' concerns and has acted appropriately. However, the headteacher has not always been able to talk openly about her actions because of issues of confidentiality. Inspectors found that senior leaders are acting appropriately in starting to eradicate inadequacies, although they appreciate their actions are not always popular.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stopsley Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 390 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	45	47	49	3	3	3	3
The school keeps my child safe	35	36	55	57	6	6	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	19	20	61	64	14	15	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	22	53	55	19	20	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	28	29	52	54	8	8	3	3
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	29	30	48	50	15	16	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	22	66	69	6	6	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	22	57	59	9	9	3	3
The school meets my child’s particular needs	17	18	61	64	15	16	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	16	53	55	15	16	9	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	15	62	65	14	15	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	19	20	62	65	8	8	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	31	32	51	53	9	9	3	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



8 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stopsley Community Primary School, Luton, LU2 7UG

Thank you for the help you gave us when we inspected your school recently. Some of you may remember that inspectors visited your school last year and asked your teachers to make some improvements. We found that things have not improved enough yet. You deserve better so your school is going to get some extra help to improve more quickly. We call this special measures and an inspector will visit regularly until your school improves. I am asking your school to focus on three main areas to make sure that:

- the teachers with leadership responsibility and governors know what they need to do to support your headteacher and deputy headteacher in making your school better
- all teaching is good enough
- those pupils who do not always behave well improve their behaviour quickly.

You can all help by working hard in lessons and making sure your behaviour in class and in the playground is as good as it can be. I know that you have been developing your school values and several of you told us about how these, and the work you are doing about bullying, is helping improve the behaviour of some already. Perhaps you could talk to your school councillors about ways to make your playground a better place to play, so behaviour will improve there. I know your headteacher has plans to improve the facilities available to you at playtime. I am sure she would appreciate your ideas on what would work well.

We know that your headteacher, many of your teachers and your parents and carers want your school to improve. We are grateful to those of you who told us about the things you are seeing improve. It will be important that you talk to inspectors when they visit your school again so you can tell them where things are getting better. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan
Her Majesty's Inspector

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