

Sturton CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	122808
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	380540
Inspection dates	6–7 March 2012
Lead inspector	Lynne Blakelock

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Evans
Headteacher	Mark Elliott
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Lynne Blakelock

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed four teachers in eight lessons, over approximately four hours. She held meetings with groups of pupils, with staff and with members of the governing body. She took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to school improvement planning, the achievement of all groups of pupils, and policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils. The inspector also analysed the 44 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is a small school compared to others of its type. The number on roll has risen steadily over recent years. All pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. A below-average proportion of pupils is disabled or has special educational needs, most of which relate to moderate learning difficulties.

The school meets the current floor standards set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. It works in partnership with 11 schools as part of the Elizabethan Collaboration.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Although it promotes pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their good behaviour and safety, its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. This is because pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching, and leadership and management are satisfactory throughout the school. The main barriers to accelerating pupils' achievement are tasks that do not consistently take into account the levels at which they work. Opportunities for pupils to practise their extended writing skills are irregular. While marking usually tells pupils what they have achieved, it does not often tell them what they need to do next or check that the advice has been acted upon. Leaders' and managers' roles, responsibilities and accountability are not sufficiently clearly defined. In particular, there is inconsistency in their monitoring and recording of pupils' progress.
- The achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards. They reach average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The satisfactory quality of teaching results in pupils' satisfactory progress throughout the school. Teachers ensure that pupils know the purpose of learning and a variety of activities engage pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They work and play safely and considerately, within a supportive environment. They feel safe, due to the good systems in place and a programme of learning that incorporates how to deal with a range of potential dangers.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's accurate understanding of the school's performance, including the quality of teaching, has resulted in performance management targets for staff that match the school's priorities. Together with strategies to strengthen the teaching of writing and mathematics, they are promoting more consistent teaching

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practices.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise standards, particularly in writing, by ensuring teaching is consistently good, through:
 - activities that offer accurate challenge to pupils of all abilities.
 - weekly extended writing tasks that focus specifically on skills that pupils need to practise and refine.
 - marking that regularly tells pupils the next steps in learning and to which they respond in subsequent work.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that leaders and managers:
 - have clearly defined roles and responsibilities which match the school's priorities and for which they are accountable.
 - monitor and record pupils' progress regularly and use the findings to move pupils' learning further forward.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

All groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily. This includes the progress made by those who are disabled or have special educational needs. Regular and focused support gives them greater confidence in offering responses. The progress of boys and those known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to other groups.

From children's average levels of knowledge and skills on entry into the Early Years Foundation Stage, they make satisfactory progress in all aspects of learning and development and good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. From Nursery, activities encourage them to be inquisitive, independent and to ponder and investigate. They consider other children when they learn and play and interact well with them in organising their learning. Most children form letters accurately and are able to recognise simple one and two-syllable words. A group of children showed great pride in accurately enunciating a group of letters.

Pupils' satisfactory progress continues through Key Stage 1 and is sometimes good. In an effective literacy lesson, pupils made accelerated progress in using lap-tops to find answers to questions they had written about bats. Many confidently identified the main differences between a fiction and non-fiction text. Pupils reach average reading levels by the end of Year 2. Some are fluent readers who can decipher unfamiliar words and show good understanding of texts. A few pupils who find

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reading difficult struggle to recognise words and are not yet able to break up words into sounds in order to articulate them accurately.

Standards across Key Stage 2 show some variability. There are gaps in their learning, which the school is now addressing appropriately. Lesson observations and recent work show standards are overall average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Progress is accelerating in writing. Many pupils are writing complex sentences for a variety of purposes and using a wide range of grammar. In mathematics, pupils build up competences in line with expectations for their age in skills ranging from identifying symmetry to calculating different angles.

Most of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire evaluated their children's progress as good. In most lessons, it is satisfactory.

Quality of teaching

While a small amount of teaching is good, most is satisfactory and results in pupils' satisfactory progress over time. Although most parents and carers believe that teaching is good, it is inconsistent between classes.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children enjoy a varied range of activities. There are fewer activities planned for the outdoor area which is not consistently used as an extension to classroom learning. Usually, there is a good balance between teaching and children learning independently.

Throughout the school, pupils show enthusiasm for learning. They usually have plenty of time to learn for themselves but sometimes teachers talk for too long. Pupils enjoy discussing their thoughts with each other. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 lesson, pupils worked together effectively to use a range of writing skills in creating a fable. The main barrier to pupils making quicker progress throughout the school is the inaccurate match of tasks to pupils' levels. Work can be too hard or too easy, particularly for those pupils capable of reaching higher levels. Teachers' questioning of pupils is sometimes effective in promoting further learning. A teacher providing support to a small group of pupils who had fallen behind in their writing skills used questioning carefully to help them to develop the skills to spell simple words. Constant reinforcement through a variety of questions resulted in their more secure understanding. However, this is not always the case.

Pupils are increasingly evaluating their own learning, albeit very basically in Key Stage 1. Teachers' written marking regularly tells pupils what they have done well but does not often tell them their next steps. The role of pupils' targets in promoting their learning is a developing aspect although there is already good practice in Year 5 and 6.

There are regular, planned opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. For example, French lessons from Key Stage 1 incorporate learning about French culture, while art and religious education

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encourage their reflection and questioning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspection evidence and the school's records over recent years show that most pupils always behave well, both in lessons and around the school. Parents and carers agree. The caring, supportive environment reflects the school's ethos. Within the close-knit community, pupils learn and play cooperatively from Nursery onwards. Expectations of their behaviour are consistent throughout the school and pupils understand them and respond to them. They enthusiastically take on roles and responsibilities from the Nursery onwards which promote their personal and interpersonal skills well, and in which they show pride.

Attendance has been average over recent years, with many pupils' attendance being regularly above average. The school makes clear its concern about holidays in term-time.

Parents and carers feel that the school keeps their children safe. Inspection evidence supports this. The school has good systems and procedures to help ensure pupils' security. During discussions and through questionnaires, pupils expressed their confidence that the school is a safe place. They show a good knowledge of several different types of bullying and how to respond to incidents. The very large majority of parents and carers agree that bullying is dealt with effectively. It is discouraged through the school's ethos, daily routines and through the curriculum. Cyber-bullying, as part of internet-safety has been a recent focus and has involved parents and carers.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has developed a very focused improvement plan which is helping the school to move forward more uniformly. Monitoring of the school's performance by the headteacher is very regular, and far more thorough than in the past, so that strategies are constantly being adjusted to reflect findings. This is the case with learning improvement plans, which are in place for those pupils who need support to help them make further progress.

The staff support the headteacher in his determination to ensure the school sustains the improvements made. However, the roles and responsibilities of teachers in leadership roles and their accountability are not well defined or matched to the school's needs. In particular, leaders and managers do not take sufficient responsibility for monitoring, recording and acting upon the findings in their areas. Performance management of staff is closely aligned to the school's priorities and to teachers' individual development needs. Training has ensured their more secure understanding of data and their confidence in assessing the levels at which pupils are working.

The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet the statutory

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requirements, through its regular reviewing of health and safety practices and procedures. The governors show a growing knowledge of the school's performance and an increasing involvement in identifying areas for development. Altogether, the school shows a satisfactory capacity to improve.

The school promotes equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination satisfactorily. Planned opportunities for all pupils to develop their inter-personal skills, and to participate in out-of-school activities, confirm this. The interesting and wide-range of extra-curricular activities, such as kick-boxing, chess and sign-language, are a stronger aspect of the satisfactory curriculum. Reading, writing and mathematics are rightly a major focus and are increasingly incorporated into other subjects, although the school acknowledges that planning for literacy in other lessons is not specific enough. Topics demonstrate the breadth of opportunity, including in developing pupils' creativity, such as in their design of packaging for chocolate. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, although their cultural understanding is less systematically covered throughout the school. Similarly, the organisation of learning from Nursery onwards is not planned carefully enough to ensure sufficiently challenging provision for more-able pupils is built-in to all planning.

Relationships between home and school are positive. Most parents and carers say that the school is welcoming and helps them to support their children's learning. The termly information meetings, which include pupils' progress data, weekly e-mails and informative newsletters, support this. Other partnerships have a satisfactory impact. The collaboration of the headteacher and governing body with other local schools has resulted in staff working together to strengthen provision and practice, including some shared training.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sturton CofE Primary School, Retford DN22 9HQ

Thank you for your politeness and helpfulness when I visited you recently. I enjoyed watching you learning and playing. I especially liked discussing your learning with you and finding out what you like about your school. You enjoy being there and you behave well. Your parents and carers are right when they say that there is a family-feel to the school. Your attendance is average overall although for many of you, it is above average. You get lots of chances to join in a range of activities, such as after-school clubs, and to take on responsibilities. You think that topics are a good way of learning.

Your school is a satisfactory school. This means that you make satisfactory progress in your learning from the Early Years Foundation Stage through to Year 6. You reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching is sometimes good but mostly satisfactory.

The headteacher is keen to improve the school. I have asked him to make sure that tasks are at just the right level for you all so that your progress can quicken. I also want him to make sure that marking of your work tells you what you need to do to make better progress. Your writing skills need to improve in particular and the headteacher is going to help you to do this by making sure that you have very regular opportunities for extended writing. Teachers will check your progress very regularly through assessments of your learning and use them to help you improve.

I have been impressed by your attitudes towards school and learning. I hope that you will continue to do the best that you can in order to help the staff bring about these improvements. A good start would be to take the advice that the teachers will give you about how to improve your work.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Blakelock
Lead Inspector

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