

St Stephens (Saltash) Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111966
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	357014
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Willcocks
Headteacher	Martin Watkins
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2008
School address	Long Park Road Saltash PL12 4AQ
Telephone number	01752 843561
Fax number	01752 849729
Email address	head@st-stephens-salt.cornwall.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2010
Inspection number	357014

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 1234 234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team visited 18 lessons and observed 12 teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, and groups of pupils. They spoke to parents and carers in the playground before school started. They observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations, and analyses of pupils' work and other assessment information. The inspection team scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 71 parents and carers, and others by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- What the school is doing to ensure progress and attainment increase by the end of Key Stage 1, following a dip in 2010.
- How much of the teaching is consistently good, to bring about rapid improvement.
- How robust are the monitoring arrangements and how successful leaders and managers at all levels are in influencing school development.

Information about the school

St Stephens is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage and hardly any speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school has Healthy Schools status and the International award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Stephens is a satisfactory school. The children make a good start in the Reception Year and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved markedly since the last inspection. The pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Years 1 to 6, with broadly average standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 2, but there is some variation in the pace of learning. Standards of attainment dropped by the end of Key Stage 1 in the 2010 national assessments. This was due partly to inconsistencies in teaching and partly due to a lack of rigour in monitoring arrangements. Sometimes, the pupils in Key Stage 1 have insufficient opportunities to produce extended writing, and expectations, especially of the most able pupils, are occasionally not high enough. The school has begun to remedy these weaknesses so that the present Year 2 are on track to meet their targets.

The pupils enjoy coming to school and like taking part in the good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities. Their behaviour is generally good in lessons, although their attention can wander if the pace of learning slows. In the playground, there is some boisterous play and jostling when the pupils line up. Parents and carers and the staff consider that there are too many inconsistencies in the way the behaviour policy is applied and look to the headteacher to provide a lead in this area, especially in the management of pupils with particular behavioural needs. The inspection found that the expectations of behaviour vary among the staff and not all misbehaviour is tackled effectively. The pupils have a good understanding of making healthy choices, and run their own healthy tuck shop. They also make a good contribution to the school and wider community through taking on responsibilities and participating in local events, such as the Saltash May Fair.

The teaching is satisfactory, but uneven in quality. There are examples of good teaching, where pupils are excited by learning, fully involved and given work that is well matched to their abilities. At other times, the pupils do not have enough independence in lessons, or take a sufficient role in assessing their own or others' work. The use of assessment information to tailor learning to meet the full range of pupils' needs varies, with an occasional lack of challenge resulting. Similarly, marking is inconsistent, with some very good examples of comments showing the pupils how to improve, while in other cases the pupils are given little indication of the next steps in their learning. A revised curriculum, introduced this term, is making a positive contribution to the pupils' enjoyment of school, with topics that the pupils find interesting. However, it is too soon to see the impact of curriculum changes on the outcomes for pupils.

Good leadership from the governing body and the two assistant headteachers has enabled the school to make satisfactory progress during an unsettled period in the senior leadership of the school. However, a consequent lack of a strategic lead has slowed the rate of improvement and meant that inconsistencies in the provision have not always been tackled sufficiently robustly, particularly in holding staff to account for the progress that

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

the pupils make. The governing body, now, challenges senior leaders well. The latest strategic plans for school development are based on accurate self-evaluation and are beginning to have an impact, particularly in improving English levels by the end of Key Stage 2. Monitoring by the English and mathematics subject leaders is proving effective in identifying where improvements are needed. In view of the strengths among many of the school's leaders and the satisfactory progress since the last inspection, the school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase progress and raise attainment at least to meet the national average by the end of Key Stage 1 by:
 - providing more opportunities for extended writing
 - having consistently high expectations of what the pupils can do and achieve.
- Ensure that all teaching is good or better by:
 - promoting the pupils' independence in lessons
 - involving the pupils in assessing their own and others' work
 - ensuring marking always shows the pupils how to improve
 - using assessment data to plan activities that match the pupils' levels of ability.
- Increase the effectiveness of all leaders and managers so that:
 - there is a clear strategic lead to the school
 - the leaders and managers at all levels ensure that policies are implemented consistently, especially regarding pupils' behaviour
 - monitoring is systematic and rigorous and followed up to hold all staff accountable for the progress that the pupils make
 - the governing body builds on its recent work to hold all of the senior leaders to account for improving outcomes for pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The pupils say that they enjoy their learning and their enthusiasm is evident in lessons. The pupils in a mixed Year 2 and Year 3 class were particularly engaged in choosing the ending for a story and acting it out. Year 6 pupils enjoyed discussing a scene from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, with good questioning helping them to develop their ideas as they wrote their own scene. The pupils make satisfactory progress from starting points a little below what is usually expected for their age when they enter the Reception class, although the rate of progress is often faster in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers, receiving appropriate support to do so. By the end of Year 6, standards are generally in line with the national average. A successful focus on improving writing meant more pupils attained the higher Level 5 in 2010.

The pupils feel safe at school, a view supported by parents and carers. They say that they feel free from bullying, but occasionally boisterous play can result in pupils inadvertently

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

getting hurt. The award of the Healthy Schools status points to the pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles, including taking part in the wide range of sports clubs available. The pupils support the school community well as 'play leaders' and by running competitions to raise money for charity. Their attendance is average and they are satisfactorily prepared for secondary school, leaving with the average levels of basic skills. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They generally get on well together, cooperating in the classroom. They have an adequate appreciation of other cultures, particularly through meeting visitors from different parts of the world.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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

How effective is the provision?

There are good relationships in classrooms between the adults and the pupils, and generally the teachers make clear to the pupils what they are going to learn. There is too much variation in the quality of teaching, with not enough that is consistently good. The impact of a revised curriculum is making learning more enjoyable for the pupils, with more opportunities for independent learning outside the classroom. For example, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoyed the challenge to make an Egyptian mummy at home and produced some high-quality work. However, the teaching of the core subjects of English and mathematics is often too directed by the teacher, with too few opportunities for the pupils to work actively and independently. Expectations of what the pupils can do and achieve vary and this is reflected in the unevenness in the quality of marking. Key Stage 1 pupils

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

do not do enough extended writing, especially linked to their topic work. Not all pupils know what their targets are, or how they are linked to National Curriculum levels of attainment. The enrichment of the curriculum is good, with plenty of clubs and visits and visitors to enhance the pupils' experiences. There are some good examples of pupils applying their basic skills in different subjects, but fewer opportunities to use information and communication technology.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. The teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to supporting individuals who have particular needs. There are good transition arrangements in place for pupils moving in and out of the school. There are inconsistencies in how incidents of unacceptable behaviour are handled, because the behaviour policy is not being implemented in the same way by all staff.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

While the headteacher has a strategic vision for the school, it has not been communicated with sufficient clarity for parents and carers, pupils and the staff, leaving some confusion. The governing body has been effective in bringing all parties together to set out a clear vision for the school. New leadership of the governing body has resulted in good governance, focused on improving the outcomes for pupils at a faster rate and in holding the headteacher and other leaders and managers to account. This has seen a renewed drive for improvement. The impact of the assistant headteachers is evident in improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in attainment in English. The monitoring of teaching and learning is improving, but is not systematic or rigorous enough to iron out all the inconsistencies remaining in the provision. The tracking of pupils' progress ensures any at risk of falling behind are identified and measures put in place to support them. Some of this work is at a relatively early stage, however, and the use of assessment information to inform the teachers' planning varies.

Safeguarding arrangements are good, with particular strengths in the way any concerns and actions taken are recorded. The governing body ensures its policies are up to date and that the staff are all trained in the latest procedures. The school includes all pupils well, but the promotion of equality is no better than satisfactory because of variations in the quality of provision for different classes. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily, with a good understanding of its local community and useful links abroad supported by the International award. The pupils have little direct experience of the different traditions and cultures that make up the United Kingdom.

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

The school works hard to engage with parents and carers and many are very supportive, such as through the work of the active 'Friends' of the school. Parents and carers who returned questionnaires raised concerns about the school's leadership and the way behaviour is dealt with, but parents and carers that the inspectors met on the playground were positive about the school's work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children settle quickly into the Reception classes because of the good provision, with a wide range of interesting and exciting activities for them to pursue. The attractive and well-resourced accommodation stimulates their interest. The children in the mixed-age class have the same opportunities as those in the single-age class. All children make good progress from starting points that are often a little below the levels expected and enter Year 1 meeting the early learning goals for their age. There is a good focus on developing writing skills, with the children writing letters to Santa Claus and posting them at their role-play post office. Routines are well established, with the children able to work independently and with sustained concentration, as when they were wrapping presents. Planning takes good account of the children's interests and thorough assessment ensures that the staff know exactly how well the children are doing. The 'learning journeys' record the children's achievements over the year in an attractive and accessible way. Since the last inspection, the outdoor area has improved and is being developed further to include focused activities in all areas of learning. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good, with a strong team working together well.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Fewer parents and carers returned questionnaires than is usual. Most agreed that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps them safe. There was a higher-than-usual level of disagreement, particularly about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and how it is led and managed. The inspection found that, while behaviour is satisfactory overall, there are inconsistencies in the way the behaviour policy is implemented. The inspection identified strengths in many aspects of leadership and management, but found that the strategic leadership was weaker.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Stephens (Saltash) 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 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 289 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	46	33	46	4	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	29	41	38	54	3	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	9	13	42	59	12	17	3	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	17	48	68	9	13	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	19	27	42	59	7	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	15	47	66	10	14	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	20	53	75	1	1	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)	17	24	39	55	7	10	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	23	42	59	7	10	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	10	36	51	15	21	9	13
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	18	42	59	9	13	4	6
The school is led and managed effectively	10	14	38	54	8	11	10	14
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	30	34	48	11	15	2	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



13 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school and for sharing your views with us when we met you and through completing questionnaires. St Stephens is a satisfactory school. It does some things well and there are other things it could improve. Here are some of its strengths.

- The children in the Reception classes get off to a good start at school.
- The pupils have a good understanding about how to keep healthy and take plenty of exercise.
- The pupils help out well at school and are involved in the local community.
- There are plenty of clubs, visits and visitors for the pupils to enjoy.
- The governing body gives a good lead to the school.
- The school has good systems in place to make sure the pupils are safe.

We have asked the school to make sure that the pupils do better by the end of Year 2, because results dropped last year. We think the pupils could do more writing about the topics they work on. We have asked the teachers to make sure that the pupils are fully involved in lessons and to show all of them how to improve when marking work. We have asked them to make sure that work is not too easy or too difficult for anyone, but just at the right level. We have also asked the headteacher and other leaders and managers to keep a careful check on how things are going, and to make sure that everybody deals with unacceptable behaviour in the same way. You all can help by telling your teachers what you enjoy about your learning and playing sensibly in the playground.

Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 1234 234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.