

Stoke Bruerne Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 121992 |
| Local Authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 359141 |
| Inspection dates | 15–16 February 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Joseph Peacock |

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

| | |
|--|---|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 39 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Jean Glanville |
| Headteacher | Eliza Bolger |
| Date of previous school inspection | 7 May 2008 |
| School address | Bridge Road Stoke Bruerne, Towcester NN12 7SD |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Five lessons taught by three teachers were observed. Meetings were held with the headteacher, Chair of the Governing Body, a parent governor and staff. The inspector talked to parents and carers and children, looked at school planning, samples of pupils' work and records of their progress. School documentation was examined including minutes of meetings of the governing body, improvement planning and that relating to safeguarding and pupils' welfare. Questionnaire responses from staff, pupils and 20 parents and carers were analysed.

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

- How much progress pupils make as they move through the school and in particular, the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more able.
- How well pupils are prepared for life in multicultural Britain.
- How effectively staff with leadership responsibilities and the governing body evaluate all aspects of the school.
- The impact of the partnership with parents and carers and quality of provision in helping children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to get off to a good start to their schooling.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average primary school and numbers have fallen slightly since the previous inspection. Pupils are taught in three classes in the morning and two in the afternoon. All are from White British backgrounds. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed-age class with Year 1 and 2 pupils. In total, there are only 11 pupils in the class. The school has gained Healthy Schools status.

Following a period of significant staffing turbulence with three headteachers in the past year and some long term absence of staff, the school entered into a collaborative partnership in January 2011 with the nearby Tiffield and Whittlebury primary schools. All three schools are of a similar size. An executive headteacher is responsible for the schools and each school has its own head of teaching and learning. This is a three year pilot scheme supported by the local authority. All teachers at Stoke Bruerne are part-time with job sharing arrangements for each class.

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

This is a satisfactory school as judged in its previous inspection. The rapidly improving momentum then reported was not maintained largely due to long periods of staffing turbulence. The governing body hopes that, once staffing has been reviewed in all three of the schools which form the collaborative partnership, the three year pilot will bring some stability. The executive headteacher has a proven track record of improving schools as evidenced in the reports from recent inspections by Ofsted of the two other schools in the partnership. Governors are extremely proud of their school. Their courage and foresight to enter into the collaborative partnership shows their determination to secure the school's future and see it improve. All are keen to become more involved in helping the school to evaluate its effectiveness but their role in this is limited at present. Staff with leadership and management roles have had limited success in bringing about improvement because of the frequent changes of headteacher. They are not sufficiently involved in evaluating the impact of the developing curriculum or quality of teaching and learning as it happens in the classroom.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. As a result, pupils' overall rate of progress is also satisfactory. Progress is satisfactory in Years 1 to 4 but increases to good in Years 5 and 6 because teaching for these pupils is usually good and on occasions is outstanding. As a result, attainment is above average at the end of Year 6. Achievement is only satisfactory overall, however, because pupils are not making consistently good progress in all classes. This is because teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not always high enough in the younger classes. It is clear from teachers' planning that accurate and up-to-date assessment information is not always being used to plan appropriate tasks which build successfully on pupils' previous learning. This means that pupils, especially the more able, are not making as much progress as they could. Writing skills in these classes in particular are not as well developed as other areas because pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to practise their skills. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because the small classes ensure they have much individual attention. Other pupils are always ready to help and support them in lessons. The high rates of attendance clearly demonstrate how much pupils enjoy coming to school. Their good behaviour is a credit to them and their parents and carers.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress rather than good because there is room for improvement in the quality of the accommodation, teaching and learning. Some activities planned are too easy or too difficult as the assessment of what some children can do is not always accurate. Children are currently not provided with sufficient opportunity to learn outdoors.

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The executive headteacher and governing body have a clear ambition to bring about further improvement. Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and has produced a carefully thought out development plan to address identified weaknesses. The decision to enter the collaborative partnership and so widen the expertise available to the school demonstrates the satisfactory capacity to make further improvement.

Up to 40% of the 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?

- Raise attainment in writing in Reception and Years 1 to 4 and make pupils' progress more consistent in all subjects throughout the school by:
 - ensuring that teachers assess pupils' attainment more accurately and use the information to plan appropriately challenging tasks for all
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills.
- Ensure that staff with leadership and management responsibilities and governors more rigorously monitor and evaluate the work of the school.
- In the Early years Foundation Stage, increase the rate of progress of children by:
 - improving assessment and strengthening planning so that all activities challenge children and build successfully on previous learning
 - improving the accommodation and developing the outdoor learning area to provide children with a wider range of learning experiences.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The very small classes mean that pupils benefit from the attention staff can provide. In the majority of lessons seen, pupils' achievement was satisfactory. All are keen to answer questions and their concentration rarely wavers, even when lesson introductions are very long and when they find easy some of the work they are given to do. They always try their best to complete whatever they are asked to do by their teachers.

By Year 2, attainment is average in reading, writing and mathematics with most making satisfactory progress from their starting points. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average largely due to some accelerated progress during the last two years in school. School data show achievement from entering school to Year 4 is satisfactory. Particular attention has been focused on improving pupils' writing, especially in Years 1 and 2, but it is too early to see how successful the measures introduced by staff have been in raising standards.

High rates of attendance, maintained over the past two years, show how much pupils enjoy school. They take full advantage of the many opportunities offered to them, for example, learning to play a musical instrument or attending the clubs and sporting activities that the school organises. Most have a good understanding of staying fit and healthy, and how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils always wear reflective clothing for the walking bus to school and their lunchtime trip to the village inn for their school dinner. They develop a good understanding of responsibility, both to their school and the wider community, notably through recycling. Representatives from each year

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group enjoy and value their roles as school councillors and buddies, looking after other at playtimes. Taking on additional responsibilities in school considerably extends pupils' social development. Good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning further enhance skills that will be of benefit in later life. Topics, lessons in religious education and assemblies successfully promote learning and give pupils a good understanding about different cultures and faiths such as Hinduism and Judaism.

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 | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 1 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |

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?

The progress pupils make is closely linked to the quality of teaching and learning. It is good when teaching is good. Features of these lessons, and the one seen which was outstanding, are a lively and interesting introduction and tasks that are planned specifically for the different ages and abilities of pupils in the class. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were totally absorbed in working out the comparative cost to carpet different rooms, for example. The teacher had high expectations of all. Progress elsewhere was less marked when lengthy introductions were directed at the whole class and when the tasks did not take sufficient account of the prior learning of some pupils. Consequently, pupils on these occasions mark time, listening to the teacher when they could be working independently and completing tasks which successfully advance their learning. Pupils' work is carefully marked, and teachers make helpful comments about how the work can be improved.

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Developing the curriculum has been a priority for all staff and this work is on-going. As writing has been identified as a weaker skill for many, there is a strong focus in some classes on providing regular opportunities for pupils to write. The topic cycle ensures pupils who are in the same class for more than one year have different topics to study and these link skills from a range of subjects. The current topic called 'Let's get going', for example, is science based but draws on pupils' research skills using computers, literacy, numeracy and creative skills. The curriculum is also enhanced by visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs for music and sporting activities. A residential visit and learning to speak French also provide pupils with additional learning experiences that enhance their personal development.

Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported in a caring, friendly atmosphere that enables them to feel safe and grow in confidence. 'We get lots of attention because we are in a small school,' is the way one pupil expressed his feelings. Parents and carers are equally positive, 'Staff care deeply about pupils' welfare,' being a typical comment. Provision to help the few pupils who may be vulnerable is a particularly strong feature, ensuring that they successfully overcome barriers to learning, improve their behaviour, and make good progress. Procedures to encourage attendance and punctuality are extremely successful. Parents and carers are very supportive and unauthorised absence is rare.

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 | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

The collaborative partnership was a bold step by the governing body. Pupils view it as an opportunity to make more friends in the two other schools. Governors and staff appreciate the high calibre of the executive headteacher. Six weeks into the pilot scheme, the headteacher has completed a thorough evaluation and shared her vision for the way forward. Staff are giving their full support and it is of credit to them that they have ensured the smooth running of the school despite staffing turbulence and their part-time status. The governing body is well informed and has a very clear view of the school's strengths and where improvements can be made. It is developing ways to become more involved in helping the school evaluate how effectively it is meeting its targets for improvement.

Improving the tracking of pupils' progress is a priority as assessment data in the past have been found to be inaccurate. This has meant that the learning needs of pupils of different ages and abilities have not always been effectively met. Tackling discrimination and ensuring equality of opportunity, especially for those pupils with special educational needs

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and/or disabilities, are uppermost in the minds of staff. Equality of opportunity is judged as satisfactory because of the uneven progress in classes. The school has a good relationship with parents and carers, who appreciate all that the school is doing for their children. Partnerships with the local church, partnership schools, sporting coaches and other specialists are strong and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and enjoyment of school.

The school has good arrangements for making sure that the pupils are as safe as possible. The teachers develop the pupils' knowledge of staying safe by using the specialist knowledge of visitors such as the local police and school nurse. Risks associated with the close proximity of the canal are made clear to pupils. The size and location of the school present challenges in developing the pupils' understanding of communities beyond their own. To counter this, the school has detailed action plans to develop community cohesion locally, nationally and internationally. Excellent links are well established with pupils in a school in Ghana.

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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

The range of attainment on entry is typical for children of this age. An analysis of children's performance shows that they make satisfactory progress with nearly all achieving the level expected of them by the end of their Reception year. However, writing skills are not as advanced as skills in other areas of learning. There was little evidence of early writing skills being planned or promoted in activities for children, indoors or outside.

The classroom is very small, limiting the range of activities that can be accommodated. The tiny outside area at the front of the school is no longer available following a health and safety audit. Plans are well advanced to move into a much larger classroom, to provide access to and to develop the outdoor area at the rear of the school. This is used

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on a daily basis for learning activities but the planning for these is not of the same quality as for indoor learning.

The children play and work well together. They benefit from having older pupils as role models and from the help that they are always willing to provide. All display independence and most concentrate well on activities that are led by adults or those they choose themselves. The teacher's expectations for some activities, such as painting a rocket with brushes that were too small or sorting coins, are not always specific or challenging enough and although children enjoy what they are doing, there are missed opportunities to develop learning further.

The executive headteacher has the expertise and vision to improve provision in this key stage. Action plans are in place and these include procedures to ensure children's progress is more accurately evaluated and steps to strengthen planning.

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

Just over half of the parents and carers returned a questionnaire and most clearly hold the school in high regard. Those who responded were unanimous in their appreciation of the quality of teaching and how much their children enjoy school. Many of those who made additional comments were very pleased with the caring, approachable staff. 'Absolutely astounded at the difference from the previous school,' and 'It is wonderful,' are typical comments. Inspection findings endorse parents' and carers' positive views and indicate that teachers could expect more of pupils, helping them to make better progress. A few parents and carers indicated that they would like more information about how well their children are doing. The inspector found that the school is doing as much as most other schools to keep parents and carers informed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stoke Bruerne Church of England 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 inspector received 20 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 39 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 11 | 55 | 9 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 10 | 50 | 8 | 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 5 | 25 | 11 | 55 | 3 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 9 | 45 | 6 | 30 | 5 | 25 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 6 | 30 | 14 | 70 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 6 | 30 | 13 | 65 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 8 | 40 | 11 | 55 | 1 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| 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) | 6 | 30 | 12 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 9 | 45 | 10 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 6 | 30 | 12 | 60 | 2 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 7 | 35 | 12 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 7 | 35 | 12 | 60 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 11 | 55 | 9 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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 | 59 | 35 | 3 | 3 |
| Primary schools | 9 | 44 | 39 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 13 | 36 | 41 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 15 | 39 | 43 | 3 |
| Special schools | 35 | 43 | 17 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 21 | 42 | 29 | 9 |
| All schools | 13 | 43 | 37 | 8 |

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 August 2010 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 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.

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.



17 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stoke Bruerne Church of England Primary School, Towcester, NN12 7SD

I really enjoyed my visit to your school and joining you in the village inn for my delicious and healthy school dinner. At present your school is satisfactory but I did see some things which are good and one, your attendance, which is much better than in most schools. This shows me how much you enjoy coming to school.

Seeing you at work in lessons, and looking at your work and the information the teachers collect, it is clear that some of you could manage to do harder work and make faster progress than you do at present. I am asking your teachers to check more carefully what you know and to plan interesting and challenging work which will help all of you to make faster progress. I would like to see you have more opportunities to practise your writing skills as standards are not as high as they are for reading or mathematics.

The youngest children in Reception are lucky to have older ones in their class who are always ready to help and look after them. The very small classroom makes it difficult to play without disturbing Year 2 as they concentrate on their tasks. I am sure most of you in your first year in school can manage harder work and I am asking your teacher to make sure you have it. I did expect to see you doing more work outdoors too.

All of you get on very well at your school. Those of you I spoke to told me that you feel safe at school, and that bullying hardly ever happens. In the lessons I visited everyone behaved really well, even when the work you were given to do was a bit too easy for some of you. Most of you were quick to tell me how proud you are of your school and how much you are looking forward to making new friends in your partnership schools. I am asking staff and governors to keep a close eye on how well things are going and to check that improvements are being made. I do hope you continue to enjoy school, and that you reach even higher standards.

Yours sincerely

Joseph Peacock

Lead inspector

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