

Stopsley Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109553
Local Authority	Luton
Inspection number	356573
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Philip Mann 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	396
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Walker
Headteacher	Bill Rowe (Interim Headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2007
School address	Hitchin Road Luton LU2 7UG
Telephone number	01582 611035
Fax number	01582 611035
Email address	stopsley.primary.admin@luton.gov.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2010
Inspection number	356573

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 two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed 22 lessons and 14 teachers, either teaching whole classes or smaller groups of pupils. Brief discussions were held with a small number of parents, and inspectors met with a group of pupils. Inspectors also held meetings with governors, senior staff and subject leaders. They observed the school's work, and looked at the self-evaluation form, school improvement planning, monitoring reports and various policies. Inspectors analysed questionnaires completed by staff and students, and 114 from parents and carers.

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

- the effectiveness of the school's initiatives to raise attainment and increase rates of achievement for all groups of pupils
- the quality of teaching and learning across the school, especially in Key Stage 2
- the use of assessment and tracking data to identify gaps in achievement and ensure that planned activities fully match the needs of all pupils
- the impact of recent changes to provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the effectiveness of the interim headteacher and other leaders and managers in driving school improvement.

Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. The majority of pupils come from different minority ethnic groups with about a third from other White backgrounds. Just less than half the pupils come from White British backgrounds. A small number of pupils are from the Traveller community. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is about average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is about the same as seen nationally although fewer pupils than average have a statement of special educational needs. Several children are looked after by the local authority. Active Schools and Healthy School accreditations continue to be held. Before- and after-school provision is managed by an external agency and is inspected separately. An interim headteacher was appointed to the school at the beginning of the 2010/11 academic year.

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

3

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 significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required 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 interim headteacher has instilled a sense of purpose in the school and this is reflected in the many positive views expressed by parents and carers. A constructive climate for learning exists where the efforts of staff are valued and pupils demonstrate a growing sense of enthusiasm for learning. Assisted by the senior leadership team and in partnership with staff from a local school, the interim headteacher is tackling, with determination, pupils' long-standing underachievement and inadequate teaching. A strong sense of teamwork and willingness to improve exists amongst the staff. This is reflected in work already underway to raise achievement which is resulting in some improvement at Key Stage 2. In 2010, attainment in English and mathematics increased to broadly average levels. Nonetheless, given pupils' starting points, this represents inadequate achievement. Although much remains to be accomplished there is satisfactory capacity to sustain further improvement.

Teaching is inadequate overall but there are positive signs of progress. Nonetheless, too much teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory and not enough was good to enable pupils in all classes to make up for the gaps in their learning. The local authority's pupil progress tracking system is now in place. However, the most recent performance information is not yet available and this is preventing teachers and senior leaders from identifying those pupils who are falling behind in their work. This means that many teachers are not in a position to make effective use of assessment information to plan work that fully matches the ability of all pupils in their class. Teachers' marking is inconsistent in quality and targets are not used effectively to inform pupils about what they need to next to improve in English and mathematics.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are satisfactory. However, when teaching is mundane or inadequate, some pupils become inattentive and sometimes disruptive. Overall, the large majority of pupils are polite and friendly towards staff and visitors. They enjoy using the wide range of play equipment at break times and play well together. Appropriate levels of care, guidance and welfare are given to pupils and safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. Older pupils state that the school is a much happier place now because poor behaviour is managed more consistently and achievement is recognised regularly in class and celebrated during weekly achievement assemblies. Values such as

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

'respect' are highlighted each month by the interim headteacher and followed up throughout the school. Pupils say they feel safe and that there is little bullying, and if it does occur staff deal with it effectively. Events such as Black History Month support pupils' broader cultural understanding of the achievements of people from differing backgrounds. Their participation in the school council, and consultation through 'pupil voice' groups, engages them appropriately in making a contribution to the school community.

The shortcomings in the curriculum identified at the previous inspection have yet to be fully addressed. Inspection evidence confirms that despite a re-organisation of time to provide a stronger emphasis on the teaching of basic skills in the morning, weaknesses remain in the teaching of guided reading and other subjects in the afternoon. Provision for the development of pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) is inadequate. Furthermore, the balance of time between other subjects is left too much to chance, leaving gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. However, the implementation of curriculum development teams, incorporating middle managers from Key Stages 1 and 2, is a positive development and promising changes have already been made this term to plan a more creative and cohesive curriculum.

Governance of the school is satisfactory. The governing body is becoming increasingly more involved in monitoring the school's work and asking challenging questions about its performance. Governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, recognising that there is still much to do before the school gives satisfactory value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement and substantially improve rates of progress for all pupils by:
 - ensuring that activities in lessons are tailored precisely to help pupils of all abilities make the next steps in learning
 - ensuring that pupil progress reviews take place regularly and that prompt action is taken if any child is falling behind.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - significantly increasing the proportion of good teaching
 - ensuring that activities are sufficiently challenging and lessons move along at a brisk pace
 - improving pupils' understanding of how they can improve their work through marking and by sharing clear criteria to enable them to judge their own success in lessons.
- Improve the curriculum by:
 - ensuring the full range of subjects are covered and that there is a good balance in the time allocated to different subject areas
 - ensuring that pupils receive their entitlement to learning in ICT
 - planning creative learning opportunities that build systematically on pupils' prior experiences.
- Make effective use of tracking data and assessment information to:

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

- identify gaps in children's knowledge and understanding
- plan activities that build on current learning
- set challenging targets for pupils' learning in reading, writing and mathematics.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

The majority of pupils demonstrate satisfactory and sometimes good attitudes to learning. When given the opportunity, most enjoy working cooperatively with others to solve problems. This occurred for example when pupils in Year 5 were investigating sound, others were researching newspaper articles in Year 3 and those in Year 1 were distinguishing fact from fiction. These opportunities are rare however.

Pupils' achievement is inadequate because their learning needs are not catered for well enough in all classes. Even though attainment in English and mathematics in Year 6 improved in 2010, with about one fifth of pupils reaching the higher level 5 in national tests, this improvement is not sufficiently evident in other classes or year groups. The progress made by different groups of pupils also varies. Those who start school speaking English as an additional language make good and sometimes rapid progress due to carefully targeted support. Pupils who are potentially more vulnerable, including looked after pupils, and those with specific learning needs, respond well to personalised support and their progress is at least satisfactory. Provision that is not well matched to the needs of other pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are the most-able, too often limits the progress these pupils are capable of making.

Discussions with older pupils confirm that many changes for the better have been put in place this term and that they can see that things are improving. They are excited about winning an award for writing and are keen to be in school, which is resulting in improved levels of attendance. Pupils show satisfactory spiritual, social and cultural development most notably through their understanding of their own and other cultures. Their moral development is good.

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 pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	3
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

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?

Although improving, the quality of teaching and learning overall is inadequate. While most lessons are planned to take account of different abilities, some tasks and activities are not matched closely enough to the needs and prior attainment of all learners in the class. In lessons judged inadequate, expectations were too low, activities were dominated by adults and insufficient use was made of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning throughout the lesson. In a quarter of lessons observed by inspectors teaching was good. The pace was brisk, the learning intentions were made very clear to pupils and resources were used well. Teachers worked hard to establish a very positive climate for learning. This is because these teachers made effective use of the new format for planning to ensure a good balance between teacher directed and independent work with specific roles for teaching assistants in supporting individual learners.

School leaders have recently introduced guided group reading and writing sessions to ensure teaching is targeted more closely to pupils' needs. They have implemented systems to collect assessment data and track pupils' progress. However, the lack of up-to-date assessment information is preventing teachers from identifying accurately the progress pupils make. Marking of written work is regular but does not give enough guidance to pupils about how to improve or set targets for them to work towards.

The curriculum is inadequate because it lacks sufficient breadth and balance to meet the full range of pupils' needs. It does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop

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

skills in the use of ICT. The school has tried to make the curriculum more relevant to pupils by teaching some subjects through cross-curricular topics, with some useful links such as the history and literacy work in Year 4 on the Second World War. However, there is weak provision for subjects such as art, music and geography across the school. The school makes appropriate use of external expertise such as sports coaches to provide some after school clubs, but opportunities for pupils to participate are limited. Pupils' learning is enhanced through a variety of visits and visitors such as a theatre group and residential trips to the Isle of Wight.

The school provides a satisfactory level of pastoral care and support for pupils and provides a safe and caring learning environment. The school has effective partnerships with external agencies in order to provide individual pupils with additional external expertise and learning support. There are good induction arrangements, especially for pupils who arrive at the school speaking little or no English.

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	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's interim headteacher and senior leaders have created a sense of determination amongst the staff to further improve the quality of provision and outcomes. This term has seen the implementation of effective procedures for the performance management of staff with the monitoring of teaching and learning at the forefront of their work. Weaknesses in teaching have been identified correctly and, together with external partners, good support programmes are in place. This work is underpinning some improvement. The restructuring of senior and middle managers into curriculum development teams is providing better capacity to sustain these actions. As a result, clear action plans are in place to address curriculum weaknesses and training for staff in the use of assessment has taken place. A detailed analysis of the school's community has led to the implementation of a comprehensive plan of action for the promotion of community cohesion. However, the school's promotion of equality of opportunity falls short of what is required because of the inconsistencies in the achievement of different groups of learners.

Procedures for safeguarding pupils and vetting staff are appropriate. The governing body works closely with senior leaders and local authority staff to ensure that short- and medium-term planning identifies key priorities for action. Governors participate satisfactorily in monitoring the school's work through focused visits and ask challenging questions of school leaders about the school's performance. The school provides inadequate value for money.

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 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	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	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

Provision has continued to improve since the last inspection and some good features are beginning to emerge. Better use is now made of the outdoor play areas and weaknesses in planning have been addressed to ensure that children are provided with an appropriate range of learning experiences. The balance between those activities that are led by adults and those chosen by children is satisfactory. Staff use informal assessments well to create a clear picture of children's development. A good emphasis is placed on the development of basic skills and children are making good progress in their early writing skills. Overall, the achievement of children in all areas of learning is at least satisfactory ensuring that the large majority are working at expected levels by the time they start in Year 1. Foundation Stage leaders demonstrate a clear vision for improving provision through detailed action planning to increase the range and quality of resources and revitalise the outdoor play area.

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

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

Views of parents and carers

A smaller proportion of parents and carers, than is typical, returned questionnaires. Many parents and carers are pleased with the recent changes being made within the school and note how the climate for learning is more positive and that their children are keen to be in school. They feel that the new 'Learning Logs' provide a much needed insight into their children's learning through homework but some still feel that more could be done to inform them about how well their children are doing at school. The weekly newsletters are much appreciated.

Some parents and carers are worried about pupils' behaviour and several expressed some concern about the quality of provision for those children with special educational needs. During the inspection, inspectors looked at the behaviour of pupils both in class and in the playground and judge that many of the pupils play very happily in the play areas under the effective supervision of adults. However, inspectors found that there are weaknesses in the provision for pupils with special educational needs.

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 114 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 396 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	45	53	46	9	8	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	48	42	64	56	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	32	63	55	8	7	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	25	65	57	13	11	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	34	30	67	59	7	6	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	24	69	61	12	11	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	29	74	65	6	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)	33	29	66	58	4	4	3	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	25	70	61	7	6	7	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	20	69	61	12	11	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	19	70	61	10	9	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	36	32	67	59	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	32	69	61	7	6	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	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.



18 November 2010

Dear Pupils

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

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you all for making us feel so welcome and sharing your views about the school. We enjoyed visiting your school and were pleased to see you playing happily with each other in the playground. We were also pleased to see how well you work with each other in lessons when you have the chance to do so. This is especially so when the lessons are well planned by teachers who use information about your progress to give you interesting things to do and problems to solve. In these lessons you make good progress and behave well. Unfortunately this is not the case in all lessons because too often the work you are given is dull or too easy and you are not challenged enough. Teachers are giving you better opportunities to learn in English and mathematics but this is not the case in many of the other subjects. You are not, for example, given enough opportunity to develop your skills in using computers.

The school has been given a 'notice to improve' which means that other inspectors will visit the school again to check that progress is being made. We have asked the governors, headteacher and staff to concentrate on making improvements to ensure that:

- you all achieve well in lessons and make good progress
- teaching in all lessons is at least good
- lessons cover all subjects in the curriculum well
- the information teachers have about your progress it is used well to plan your work and to set targets for you to work towards.

Many parents and carers have told us how the interim headteacher has achieved a lot this term to ensure that everybody behaves well and that your efforts are celebrated in assemblies. We agree with them. You can all play your part in helping to make your school a better place to learn by working hard and always striving to do you best.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann

Her Majesty's Inspector

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.