

Stukeley Meadows Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110772
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	356813
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Alan Jarvis

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	388
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Bingley
Headteacher	Phillip Leverett
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 14 teachers in 18 classroom visits. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher and senior staff responsible for key areas of the school's work. Inspectors looked at planning, minutes of meetings and other documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and pupils' learning and progress. Several informal discussions were held with parents and carers. Questionnaires returned by 78 parents and carers, 16 members of staff and 100 pupils were analysed.

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

- How has the school reacted to the downward trend in results in writing and mathematics in Year 6?
- How challenging is the teaching in the mixed-aged classes in Years 3 to 6?
- How well does the school develop pupils' personal qualities?
- How effectively are senior leaders driving improvement?

Information about the school

The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage in this above-average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average and rising in the lower part of the school. A few pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural needs. Pupils are taught in single-age classes in Reception and Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 6 they stay with their class teacher for two years and are taught in mixed-aged classes. The school has the Active Mark award and has achieved Healthy School status. It also has the Financial Management Standard in Schools 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?

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' progress, attainment and the curriculum in mathematics in Years 3 to 6.

Pupils' achievement is inadequate. Children make a good start in the Reception classes. Satisfactory progress is maintained until the end of Year 2 where attainment is average in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, a decline in attainment in the writing element of English seen last year has been reversed. The latest results show that attainment in English is average and progress has been satisfactory. In contrast, the decline in mathematics is severe. Attainment in several classes in Years 3 to 6 is low and pupils make too little progress. The main causes of this underachievement are that too little time is allocated for learning and not enough emphasis is given to teaching mental mathematics. Some teachers lack confidence in teaching the subject. More accountability has been introduced by giving teachers clear targets for raising pupils' attainment but this has not sufficiently improved outcomes.

Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has not been strong enough to adequately tackle pupils' slow progress, particularly in mathematics. The leadership and management of teaching have not ensured consistency of practice or driven sufficient improvement in the proportion of lessons in which pupils make good progress in learning. Some teaching seen by inspectors was good or better but there are several reasons why it is not consistently effective. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of their pupils. While teachers regularly plan a range of activities to match the learning needs of different pupils, these are not always well executed to provide consistently good challenge. The pace of lessons sometimes slows because teachers spend too much time on explanations, leaving insufficient time for pupils to engage in challenging learning.

Pupils enjoy school. The good quality care provided is helped by a range of effective links with several external partners. Many aspects of pupils' personal development remain good, such as their strong spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils have a good understanding of safe and unsafe situations such as cyber-bullying, fireworks and cycling on busy roads. They have a good awareness of what constitutes healthy eating and rate highly the opportunities to take part in physical activities in school. This reflects the national awards the school has gained in these areas. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are consistently good. Behaviour is also good and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

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There is a satisfactory drive for improvement. Although the school is aware of the problems in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, action is at an early stage and has not had time to have a significant impact on underachievement. Secure systems are in place to track pupils' progress, monitor and improve teaching and plan for improvements. However, a lack of sharpness in the action taken limits success in accelerating pupils' academic progress and reducing underachievement. Nevertheless, the school's broadly accurate self-evaluation and leaders' and the governing body's success in reversing the previous downturn in English show the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the summer term 2011, raise attainment in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - providing time to teach the subject in sufficient depth
 - giving more emphasis to the teaching of mental mathematics
 - providing training to improve teachers' mathematical knowledge
 - ensuring all teachers are fully accountable for the rate of pupils' progress.
- By the start of the autumn term 2011, increase the proportion of consistently good teaching throughout the school by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can attain
 - ensuring lessons always have a good pace
 - checking learning activities challenge pupils to give of their best
 - improving the quality of marking and feedback to pupils so that they are clear on what they need to do to improve their learning
 - ensuring pupils use their targets for learning more often in lessons.
- By the start of the spring term 2011, improve the rigour with which academic outcomes are monitored so that potential downturns are immediately addressed, progress quickened and the right support is provided to any pupil who is falling behind in their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

4

Attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly average. Over the past three years, attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6 has been declining. It was low in 2010. Current data show that it is also low in several classes in Years 3 to 6 including the current Year 6. In contrast, attainment in English has been average and, with the exception of last year, is in line with that found at the inspection in March 2008.

Inspectors saw pupils making satisfactory progress in mathematics lessons in Years 3 to 6 but work in pupils' books shows that this was not usually the case because of too little time being allocated to the subject. Consequently, overall progress is inadequate. In one Year 5 and 6 lesson pupils settled well to the task of solving problems using factors and multiples but lost focus as the teacher's input was too lengthy. In another class doing the same activity, pupils worked more rapidly, little time was wasted and the teacher intervened very effectively to improve the pace of learning.

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Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making slightly better progress than other pupils but only a few of them are consistently making good progress.

Intervention work often has a good impact to begin with but the school has found this difficult to sustain over time. The few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are making the same rate of progress as other pupils and a few, such as those from Polish backgrounds, make good progress once their understanding of English improves.

Pupils work well in groups and show satisfactory levels of independence. Participation in fundraising for charity and taking on the role of adults in the school in 'Take Over' days is helping them develop good life skills. However, their attainment and application of basic skills in mathematics is weak and inadequately prepares them for secondary school. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and show respect for themselves and others. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to be involved in school and the wider community but these are mainly centred on specific groups such as the school council and choir. Pupils enjoy finding out about other cultures and say they would like to do more of this. They do not know enough about how various cultures within the United Kingdom are similar to and different from each other.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	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	2
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?

Teaching has not adequately addressed the pupils' declining progress and attainment in mathematics. Teachers plan together and prepare a range of activities which are

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potentially well matched to pupils' different needs. However, there is inconsistency in the execution of these plans. At best, pupils are challenged through questioning, timing and sharply focused intervention, while other lessons lack the same good tempo and challenge because explanations are too long or questioning fails to extend learning. Marking is strong on correction but does not pinpoint the pupils' next steps in learning. While pupils know their learning targets, teachers do not give sufficient priority to them being an integral part of most lessons. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are managed well. Teaching assistants are satisfactorily deployed, with some confidently leading whole-group sessions.

The curriculum is inadequate because the time allocated to mathematics falls well short of that typically found and varies between year groups. The curriculum in English is satisfactory, with a strengthened focus on writing helping to improve attainment. In other respects, the curriculum makes a positive contribution to pupils' enjoyment and personal development. The introduction of teaching through topics has encouraged more independence and helped pupils make creative links between different subjects. Pupils value the clubs on offer which range from sports to art to pet care, take-up is high.

The school cares for its pupils well. Most parents agree that their children feel safe in school and are well looked after. The sometimes complex needs of potentially vulnerable pupils are met well through joint working with other services. Child protection procedures are robust. Close links with other schools ensure smooth transition to secondary schools. Extended arrangements are put in place to help vulnerable pupils become acquainted with their new school and teachers.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team has a clear view of where improvements are needed. Satisfactory systems to drive improvement forward are in place. Staff are good at spotting where problems are but the follow up is not always rigorous enough. For example, the school development plan has a good focus on improving mathematics but the success criteria do not make clear by how much attainment and progress need to improve. A better system for checking how well pupils are progressing has been introduced and support for pupils who are falling behind is becoming more sharply focused. However, the impact is variable in Years 3 to 6 and not consistently strong enough to address the underachievement in mathematics.

Steps taken to improve the quality of teaching have not adequately addressed inconsistencies in practice. Observations of teaching, while identifying points for

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improvement, are overgenerous because too little account is taken of the impact that teaching has on the progress of different groups of pupils. The introduction of mixed-aged classes is helping to strengthen teachers planning and provides the platform for them to be made more accountable for pupil's progress over a two year period.

The governing body is supportive and fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily. It adds to the school's analysis of pupils' performance with its own incisive breakdown and is active in monitoring the school's performance. This has ensured that the headteacher has robust performance management targets related to pupils' achievement. However, the school has been too slow to use the good data it has on pupils' performance in mathematics and, as a result, achievement remains inadequate. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory although the school recognises that pupils' knowledge and understanding of the rich cultural diversity in the world in which they live is under-developed. Staff are suitably trained on safeguarding matters and policies and procedures meet current requirements. Homework arrangements have been drawn up in consultation with parents and carers. The steps taken to help them support their children at home, for example by providing more mathematics homework, do not fully satisfy parents' wishes.

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	4
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	2
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

Children make good and sometimes better progress in their learning and many reach the Early Learning Goals by the start of Year 1, and some exceed them. They talk confidently about their learning and could explain, for example, how the composter rots leaves to 'good rich earth' in which they can plant bulbs. Relationships between children and with adults are very positive. Provision in the outdoor area is exemplary. The highly stimulating indoor and outdoor activities engage the children fully and they confidently make choices and decisions. The interventions adults make in children's learning reflect expert

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knowledge of how young children learn and planning for their unique individual needs. The strong team works well with a common sense of purpose. There are good links with parents, who are well informed about what their children are learning but not enough account is taken of their views when planning activities. Transition arrangements with the Year 1 classes are not as strong as they might be because the good assessment data passed on by Early Years Foundation Stage staff is not fully utilised to plan work in Key Stage 1.

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	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Of the parents and carers who returned questionnaires, almost all are happy with the school although a few feel that it could be better led and managed and their children's needs could be better met. The inspectors found that the school is satisfactorily led and managed but there is clearly an urgent need to address the inadequacy found in mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Those parents with whom the inspectors spoke expressed concerns about how well the school supports pupils with an additional need. The inspection evidence shows that this is satisfactory. A number of parents wrote to say how happy their children were at school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stukeley Meadows 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 388 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	59	27	35	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	54	32	41	4	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	45	32	41	7	9	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	53	26	33	7	9	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	43	55	25	32	5	6	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	51	31	40	4	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	47	39	50	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)	34	44	30	38	4	5	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	50	28	36	7	9	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	37	36	46	6	8	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	32	40	51	7	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	37	47	28	36	9	12	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	55	26	33	7	9	1	1

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.



8 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stukeley Meadows Primary School, Huntingdon, PE29 6UH

Thank you for making us so welcome and helping us when we came to visit your school. You told us how much you like your school. However, not enough of you are making the progress you should in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and attainment is too low. This is why we have given the school a 'notice to improve'. This means that inspectors will visit the school again to check its progress.

However, there are a number of strong features. You are looked after well. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start and provision, especially in the outdoor area, is excellent. You told us that you feel safe, the school helps you develop a good understanding of how to live healthily and you enjoy the clubs you attend. Your attendance over recent years has also been above average. Well done! Keep this up so you can make the best of the opportunities on offer. Your behaviour is also good in lessons and at other times and this is helping you learn. We also saw many instances of you working independently in lessons.

The school has some important things to do to improve. To help this happen we have asked your headteacher and the governing body to:

- help you do better in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 by providing more time for it, and giving staff further training on how to always teach the subject well
- ensure that there is more good teaching so that you make faster progress in all subjects
- check your progress more rigorously so that quick action is taken to give the right support to anyone who falls behind in their learning.

I know you will all wish to work closely with your teachers and that you will feel more confident in making an extra effort with your work, especially in mathematics by referring to your targets more frequently.

Yours sincerely

Alan Jarvis

Lead inspector

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