

Sturton by Stow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120478
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	358770
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Jim Griffin

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	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachael Dunbar
Headteacher	Helena Allen
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2007
School address	School Lane Lincoln LN1 2BY
Telephone number	01427 788210
Fax number	01427 787159
Email address	admin@sturton-by-stow.lincs.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	14–15 October 2010
Inspection number	358770

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 additional inspectors. Four of the five teachers were observed, covering seven lessons or parts of lessons. One lesson was jointly observed with the headteacher. The inspectors held discussions with governors, the headteacher and other staff, a group of older pupils and with the school improvement partner. They looked at a range of school documentation, including data showing the progress made by pupils and samples of their work. Questionnaires returned by 74 parents and carers, 74 pupils and 14 members of staff were analysed.

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

- How much progress is made by current pupils and has the previous slower progress in mathematics been addressed?
- To what extent do pupils' personal qualities, including their attitudes to learning, affect their progress?
- Does monitoring by senior staff have a positive effect on developing consistency in the quality of teaching and learning?

Information about the school

Sturton by Stow is a smaller-than-average sized primary school. Pupils are mostly taught in mixed-age classes. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and live in the local village or the surrounding district. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average, with most of these pupils having moderate or specific learning difficulties.

The school has the Activemark and the International Schools (Intermediate) awards and holds Healthy School status.

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 and improving school. Pupils feel safe and valued because staff know the pupils well and provide good levels of care. Relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils are polite, have positive attitudes towards their learning and enjoy coming to school. They are keen to contribute to the school community and take their responsibilities seriously. All this is reflected in their good attendance levels.

Children get off to a good start in their learning in Reception, having entered with skills that are generally consistent with those expected for their age. In later years, while pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, most pupils make satisfactory progress to reach broadly average attainment by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics. Achievement in writing and mathematics is lower than in reading. The main reason behind the satisfactory progress and average attainment is the satisfactory rather than better teaching. While most lessons contain good features, in too many lessons the measures to ensure pupils make good progress are not sufficiently robust or systematic. The level of challenge for learners, especially the more able, is not always high enough. The use of assessment to inform pupils how well they are doing is not consistent enough. This is most evident in the quality of marking and in the use of targets for individual pupils to accelerate their progress. The curriculum is broad and well balanced; the topic-based emphasis across the curriculum creates meaningful links between subjects that add to pupils' enjoyment and interest in lessons. All Key Stage 2 pupils learn French and there is a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities.

Under the headteacher's leadership a robust system to track and review pupils' progress has been introduced. Among staff, there is more ownership and shared responsibility for improvement, aided by regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. While some weaknesses in teaching are being tackled more remains to be done. The evaluation of lesson planning, marking and the use of pupil targets have not led to a shared, consistent approach that results in good learning. The monitoring of lessons does not yet put enough emphasis on assessing the progress made by pupils. Improvement plans are not always guided by clear targets, so that progress could be more objectively evaluated. The governing body works appropriately to ensure the school meets its statutory responsibilities, but the school's promotion of community cohesion does not yet focus sufficiently on diversity within a national context. Parents are broadly satisfied with what the school provides. There is an opportunity to improve the school's partnership with parents and carers by taking a more systematic approach to addressing the concerns of some. The school engages well with its local community but pupils do not develop a broad enough understanding of the wider national community. Given the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs, the successful introduction of a robust system to track and review pupils' progress,

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

early signs of improvement in writing and mathematics and good teamwork, the school has satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good across the school
 - learning activities are sufficiently challenging to meet the needs of all groups of learners
 - pupils are given clear and regular guidance on what they must do to take the next steps in learning.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - developing a more consistent approach to lesson planning, marking and the use of individual targets for pupils
 - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching and learning puts more emphasis on assessing the quality of pupils' learning and progress
 - ensuring that priority areas in the school improvement plan include clear outcomes that form the basis against which progress is evaluated
 - using regular parental surveys, organised by the governing body, as an indicator of where progress is being made and where further work is needed.
- Improve the school's promotion of community cohesion by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding of cultural diversity within a national context.
- 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.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement is broadly average in Years 1 to 6. Observations of lessons and other inspection evidence show that learning in different classes varies according to the quality of teaching and this is reflected in pupils' satisfactory progress. In all lessons seen, pupils' attitudes to learning were good. They are quick to start work and show good levels of concentration during their individual work. More systematic use of assessment information is beginning to increase pupils' progress but this is not yet a consistent feature in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, based on the good support they receive in lessons and effective reviews of their education plans.

Pupils behave well and say they are safe. They have a good understanding of personal safety and how to avoid risks, whether on the internet or during journeys to and from school. They understand that exercise and a healthy diet are important to their healthy development. The school council is a useful forum for pupils' views and gives its members a clear understanding of what is involved in being an effective representative. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community in other ways, for example acting as playground leaders at lunchtime or raising money for charitable causes at home and

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

abroad. Their average standards in basic skills, good attitudes to work and excellent social skills provide a good base for their future economic well-being. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is an undoubted strength. However, pupils have few opportunities to engage with children, in other parts of the United Kingdom, whose cultural backgrounds are different from their own.

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	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	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?

While the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, there are some recurring strengths in most lessons. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. The interactive whiteboard and pupils' whiteboards are well used to support learning. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the combination of these whiteboards made the task of finding synonyms for 'horrible' much more interesting. In a Year 4/5 lesson, the use of the pupils' whiteboards encouraged them to write more freely than if they were writing in their exercise books. Teachers have good strategies to involve pupils through questioning, discussions in pairs and by getting pupils to share their understanding with the rest of the class. The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. While lesson objectives are usually shared with pupils, the expected learning is too often not well pitched to challenge all groups of learners, especially the more able. In too many lessons, opportunities are missed to identify and address errors in some 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

understanding. There is still too much variation between classes in the quality of marking and in the use of pupil targets to secure consistently good learning.

The school has developed a topic-based curriculum that makes many meaningful links between subjects. This approach is contributing to improving pupils' writing, for example, as it provides a clearer purpose for writing tasks. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, including sports, music and gardening clubs. These are well attended.

The good relationships between adults and pupils promote a caring environment where all pupils and their needs are well known. There is good use of outside agencies to provide additional support for pupils experiencing family difficulties. Induction arrangements and transition arrangements to secondary school are well established and effective.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Aided by external support and a more strategic approach by the governing body, the headteacher has established both the consensus and momentum to improve the school's performance. As a result, the focus is on the right improvement priorities. The governing body has become a more influential partner since the previous inspection. It has a well-informed view of the school, aided by regular visits and members are becoming increasingly skilled at holding the school to account.

The school has secure arrangements to safeguard the welfare of pupils and to make sure that those working with them are properly vetted. There is a satisfactory partnership with parents. Good links with local schools contribute to pupils' sporting opportunities, while links with a range of outside agencies make an important contribution to some pupils' well-being. The effectiveness of its positive measures to promote equal opportunity is compromised by the variations in the progress made by different groups of pupils. The school's work to promote community cohesion is satisfactory. While the school has a strong understanding of its immediate community context, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to gain a meaningful insight into what life is like for others from different religious and cultural backgrounds.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in Reception. They start with knowledge and skills that are at least consistent with those expected for their age. Their personal and social skills are somewhat higher than those expected. By the time they leave, almost all have reached the goals expected nationally and most exceed these levels. The provision is good, centred on good teaching and a good curriculum that is well supported by the good range and quality of the resources. Staff are adept at using assessments of children's work to plan the next steps in learning and to check on every child's progress. The classroom, both inside and outdoors, covers all areas of learning through a judicious balance of activities led by adults and those initiated by children. A number of the new parents commented positively on how quickly their children have settled into the well organised and welcoming classroom. Links have been strengthened recently with the pre-school provision that is housed within the school building. All this reflects good leadership and management, where adults work well as a team.

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

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

Based on the high response level and additional written comments, parents and carers are broadly satisfied with the school's work. They are particularly positive about the way the school keeps their children safe and helps them to have a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors' findings confirm these positive views.

A small minority of parents do not consider that the school is well led and managed. The survey, supported by additional written comments, indicates that the underlying reasons for this view relate to concerns about the progress their children are making in some classes and a suggested lack of an effective response once these concerns are raised with the school. Inspection findings confirm that the quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. This report identifies improvement to the progress made by pupils in writing and mathematics as an action point so that it becomes consistently good across the school. The report also asks the governing body to organise regular surveys of parents' views as a way of checking that progress is being made in addressing parents' concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sturton by Stow 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 132 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	53	29	39	4	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	43	58	28	38	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	42	31	42	8	11	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	31	36	49	9	12	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	25	34	33	45	7	9	3	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	41	30	41	7	9	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	54	30	41	2	3	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)	20	27	40	54	7	9	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	32	34	46	5	7	3	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	24	36	49	7	9	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	23	32	43	9	12	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	15	20	33	45	14	19	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	42	30	41	5	7	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.



18 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sturton by Stow Primary School, Lincoln, LN1 2BY

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave me and my colleague when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you, visiting your classes and looking at your work. You helped us to get to know your school and this letter is to tell you what we found during the inspection. Your school is a satisfactory one. Here is a list of some of the things we liked most.

Your attendance and behaviour are good

The staff look after you well and you feel safe in school.

You are developing a good understanding of how to stay healthy and happy.

You make a good contribution to the school and the local community.

We were impressed with how thoughtful and articulate most of you are by the time you reach Year 6.

The teachers and the governing body want to improve your school and we are trying to help them with this. Here are three things that we want your school to focus on.

Speed up your learning in writing and mathematics.

Make sure that the checks done by adults lead to improvements in your learning.

Provide you with more opportunities to learn about the customs and beliefs of a wide range of people in the United Kingdom.

Continue to work hard and thereby help the school to go from strength to strength.

Yours sincerely

Jim Griffin

Lead 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.