

Old Stratford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121892
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359108
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Weston 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	225
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Gill Tween
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, three parts of lessons and an assembly. They observed nine teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, they observed the school's work including a sample of pupils' books and looked at safeguarding procedures. They scrutinised internal assessment and tracking data, special educational needs and inclusion documentation and analysed questionnaires from 161 parents and carers, 120 pupils and 24 staff.

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

- The rates of progress made by boys throughout the school, particularly the more able.
- The effectiveness of strategies implemented by senior leaders to sustain and/or improve the quality of teaching following recent staffing changes.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities following recent staffing, management and curriculum changes.
- The effectiveness of induction arrangements for staff newly appointed to the school.

Information about the school

The school is slightly smaller than the average. Most pupils are White British, with few from different minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs, is below that found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals is well below the national average. The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs for its pupils.

The school has received several awards in recent years, including Artsmark, Activemark, Healthy Schools, ECO Schools and International Schools awards.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school, which has improved significantly since the last inspection. Effective leadership and better teaching ensures that pupils make good progress in their academic development and achieve outstandingly well. It is a very harmonious community because everybody takes good care of the pupils and provides exceptionally well for their diverse needs. As result, pupils feel extremely safe and secure. They get on well together. Pupils enjoy their time at school and are rightly proud of it. This accounts for their high levels of attendance. Equally, most parents and carers report that they are also very pleased with the school. Comments such as, 'Old Stratford is a lovely school, one which our children enjoy coming to every day,' and 'We are very fortunate to have such a great school in our village,' are typical of many.

Pupils are helped to grow in confidence. Their behaviour is good and they are eager to learn, and this contributes to their increasing academic success. Pupils build on the good start they receive in the Reception class. By the time they leave, their attainment in English and mathematics is high and much better than in most schools. Girls and boys of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more able, make good progress. This ensures that they are extremely well prepared for secondary education and the world beyond.

The quality of teaching and the use of assessment are good, although not yet consistently so. Teachers manage their classes effectively and engage and motivate learners well. They have suitably high expectations of their pupils and generally meet their differing needs effectively. Strategies are increasingly being implemented to develop pupils' independence, but school leaders know that more frequent opportunities are required. Additionally, although a range of questioning techniques is used by teachers, questions do not always extend or challenge pupils' thinking. Systematic procedures for setting targets for individual pupils to raise their attainment to a higher level are not yet in place in every class. Good feedback to pupils about their work is evident in some of their books, but not in all year groups.

Leaders and managers at every level are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities with regard to raising standards and maintaining the quality of provision. They have an accurate view of how well the school is doing. Monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress based on teachers' assessments and test results are consistent and accurate. This helps with identifying where intervention is necessary to ensure most pupils make good rates of progress. Although systems are in place for recording the rare key incidents that occur at the school, some are too informal.

The high achievement of pupils, good leadership and management, the accurate self-evaluation, and the improvements since the last inspection all point to a school with a good capacity for sustained improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By February 2012, improve the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - marking consistently informs pupils about the next steps in learning
 - all pupils know their targets and what they need to do to achieve them
 - teachers' questioning routinely challenges pupils' thinking
 - frequent opportunities are provided to develop pupils' independence.
- By April 2011, introduce and promote formal systems for recording key incidents that occur within the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy their learning, and this was very evident in lessons. They respond enthusiastically to their teachers' expectations and are keen to do well. They are very willing to answer questions and often make thoughtful and articulate contributions to discussions. They cooperate effectively and particularly enjoy working in groups. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 2, pupils enjoyed watching a recording of the 'Night Train' by W H Auden, practising the rhythms and finding interesting ways of performing the poem to each other. Pupils apply themselves well when producing extended writing, for example, when pupils in Year 6 were writing arguments about the benefits of computers from summarised notes. This illustrates why pupils are making good progress overall from their above average starting points.

There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported sensitively, which enables them to become confident learners and to make as much progress as their peers. Most of these pupils go on to reach the expected levels for their age by the time they leave. More able pupils respond well to the challenges provided by their teachers and the large majority reach the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.

Pupils generally get on well with each other and with the adults working in the school. They know the school rules, and most have a strong sense of moral responsibility. Their social development is strong, and pupils take responsibility for each other, acting as monitors or school councillors. Pupils are rightly very proud of their charity work and through this are learning very effectively about their wider global responsibilities. These factors, together with their outstanding literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, ensure they are getting an excellent grounding for the future.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and, in the very best lessons, they engage pupils enthusiastically in the activities. Teaching assistants are deployed well. Teachers are good at monitoring pupils' progress over the lesson, and assessment of pupils' learning is good. Pupils' books are marked regularly. Teachers' comments are supportive and usually provide pupils with good guidance on how to improve their work, though this can be inconsistent. Questioning during lessons is generally successful, but sometimes does not offer sufficient challenge or support to either individuals or groups. In some lessons, opportunities are missed to develop pupils' independence because pupils' choice is restricted or frameworks are provided unnecessarily by teachers for pupils to record their work.

The curriculum is well established in Key Stage 1. Recent improvements have been made in Key Stage 2 and are being systematically introduced. Interesting themes, such as the study of Australia, Africa and chocolate, are increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding that they are part of a wider global community. The extensive range of additional activities and excursions provided considerably enriches pupils' education. The many sports and arts activities are recognised by the school's national awards. Through music, art and the study of French and Spanish, pupils are prepared extremely well for their secondary education.

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Parents and carers appreciate the extremely caring ethos of the school. 'The teachers and the head are very approachable,' and 'The teaching staff and support staff are all very supportive,' are typical comments. All staff do their utmost to ensure that each pupil's individual needs are fulfilled. The school is very successful in supporting vulnerable pupils who can find school difficult. There is good support for pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities, enabling them to make as much progress as their peers. Pupils are also given good support at the times of transition, whatever secondary school they are moving to. The breakfast and after-school clubs are well attended and provide an important service to the school's families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership which has ensured the commitment of staff and high morale. All staff said that they feel valued and that their views are taken seriously, so that all are working well together to bring about good school improvement and raise achievement. There is a clear and shared vision throughout the school. A number of teachers and governors have recently been appointed. Induction procedures, particularly for the three newly qualified teachers, are good. Some subject leaders are also new to their roles. They are increasing their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects through a sound range of monitoring and evaluation activities.

Governors are supportive and knowledgeable and ensure that the school meets its statutory responsibilities. They offer a good balance of support and challenge to school leaders. Resources are used extremely well and the school is attractively maintained to a high standard; good use is made of the outside environment by all age groups. Staff are well deployed. They receive excellent support and professional development. Consequently, the school provides outstanding value for money. The protection of children is a high priority for staff and the arrangements for their safeguarding are good. The headteacher has informal systems in place for recording rare incidents such as racist behaviour or misbehaviour. However, these are not formalised or located centrally so that nominated staff have access to them in the event of the headteacher's absence.

The school's success in promoting equal opportunities and eradicating discrimination is evident in the everyday life of the school. Pupils achieve outstandingly well and there is no evidence of the underachievement of any groups of pupils. The school tracks the progress of different groups closely to alert them to any trends that may arise. The school makes a strong contribution to community cohesion at the school and local levels and has

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established links with schools in Australia and Uganda. Its strategy to promote it at the national level is at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	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	1
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the school, their skills and understanding are wide ranging but generally better than found in most schools. Productive relationships are established with parents and carers, which enable children to quickly become confident and eager learners. A good and effective emphasis is placed on activities led by adults to develop children's early literacy and numeracy skills in particular. At the same time, opportunities are provided for the children to explore the world around them and to play together around themes such as 'The Three Pigs', which enables them to develop curiosity and social skills. Although skills are developed well, opportunities are sometimes missed to consolidate learning. For instance, children worked with an adult to distinguish the properties of different shapes. But afterwards, too few activities were provided for children to practise their learning and further secure their understanding.

Staff work closely together to plan to meet the needs of the children in all areas of their learning. Detailed notes are made of children's progress and these are used to plan learning programmes. However, there is scope to further improve assessment and accelerate rates of progress by increasing their frequency and precisely identifying the next steps in children's learning. Relationships between children and staff are warm and supportive and behaviour is good. As a result, children make good progress. Almost all attain the early learning goals expected for children at the end of the Reception Year and a great many exceed them. Staff work effectively as a team and their work is overseen by the headteacher.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers responding to the questionnaire was higher than usual for primary schools. Most parents and carers express high levels of support for the school. Almost all feel that the teaching is good, the school keeps their children safe and that their children enjoy school. Most are happy with their children's experiences at Old Stratford. Inspectors endorse these views. A few did not feel that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. During this inspection, behaviour was good and any minor transgressions were dealt with promptly and sensitively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Old Stratford 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 161 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 225 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	96	60	63	39	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	114	71	42	26	2	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	72	45	81	50	8	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	67	42	86	53	7	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	79	49	78	48	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	78	48	77	48	6	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	88	55	66	41	1	1	2	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)	70	43	75	47	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	72	45	77	48	9	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	65	40	79	49	11	7	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	62	39	88	55	6	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	104	65	48	30	3	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	107	66	47	29	1	1	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	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.



10 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Old Stratford Primary School, Milton Keynes, MK19 6AZ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Many of you told us how proud you are of your school. You have every right to be. It is a good school where you are achieving exceptionally well and attaining high standards. From your start in Reception to the end of Year 6, you are making good progress.

We were impressed by your sensible attitudes and good behaviour. You know a great deal about keeping healthy and safe, and the way everyone gets on so very well together helps to make Old Stratford such a happy, friendly place to be. The school takes excellent care of you and you benefit from good teaching in your well-run school.

Although teaching is good, we have challenged your teachers to make it even better! You told us how much you appreciated the help you get from teachers and other adults, but some of you said you were not sure how well you are getting on or how to improve. We have asked the teachers to make this clearer for you. We have also asked the teachers to check out your understanding by asking you more challenging questions. In addition, we noticed how much you enjoyed exploring ideas for yourselves and solving problems. Consequently, we have asked your teachers to make sure they give you more opportunities to do this in lessons. Finally, we have asked school leaders to find ways of recording the important events that happen in the school, so that appropriate adults can have access to the information if your headteacher is not present.

Your headteacher and staff are working hard to make the school even better.

We wish you every success for the future and hope you continue to enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector

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