

# Stone St Mary's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118596
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	358396
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Richard Potts

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	332
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alaric Bonthron
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 December 2008
<b>School address</b>	Hayes Road Greenhithe DA9 9EF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by 3 additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons taught by 14 teachers, looked at pupils' books, held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils and spoke to some parents. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of school documentation, including the improvement plans, safeguarding policies and procedures, school data about pupils' progress, monitoring reports and curriculum plans. In addition, inspectors considered 100 parental questionnaires as well as 24 questionnaires from staff and 96 from pupils.

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

- The progress achieved by pupils across the school, and most especially among the higher attainers, to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging.
- The extent to which assessment information is used to identify pupils at risk of underperforming and to guide and focus teaching, so that they make better progress.
- The extent to which the curriculum is adapted to meet the differing learning needs of all pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- The effectiveness of the school's initiatives to promote regular attendance.

## Information about the school

Stone St. Mary's C of E Primary School is a larger than average-sized school, with an Early Years Foundation Stage for Reception-age children. It is a popular school and has expanded rapidly over the last three years with 20% more pupils on roll than at the time of the previous inspection.

The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is just over half the national average, although it is rising as population patterns change. The school operates a breakfast club.

Around 27% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and roughly one in every twelve speaks English as an additional language.

The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities is just below half that found nationally, although the overall number of those identified with some form of special educational need and/or disability is broadly in line with the national average.

In the last two years, the headteacher has overseen a significant number of new appointments. Half of the teaching staff, including members of the senior leadership team, is relatively recently appointed to the school.

The school has gained a number of awards, including Healthy Schools and the Eco Silver 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**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Some aspects of its work are good and relationships between parents, carers and the school are exemplary. They underlie the school's growing popularity and sharply rising roll. Decisive action over the last three years, based on an accurate analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development, has resulted in a sharp rise in attainment and improvements in the quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school. This, in addition to the accelerating rate of progress, bears testimony to the effectiveness of the school's development and its good capacity to continue improving.

Accelerating rates of progress in the earlier years of Key Stage 2, together with the continuing high attainment in Key Stage 1, indicate that the school's drive to eradicate a legacy of underperformance is well advanced.

While the results of Key Stage 2 tests confirm that attainment is now securely in line with national averages, the school's own data show that an increasing proportion of younger pupils are attaining levels in English and mathematics that are in line with, or better than, those in similar schools. Girls continue to outperform boys in English, but the gap is narrowing. Boys' attainment in mathematics has steadily improved so that it is now in line with that of the girls.

Improved procedures for identifying pupils' learning needs have begun to impact on the quality of teaching, so that most pupils make at least satisfactory progress. There is, nevertheless, variation between year groups, because teachers do not use assessment consistently well to build on pupils' prior learning. Where assessment is used most effectively to identify gaps in understanding and then to systematically match tasks to pupils' learning needs, for example towards the end of Key Stage 2, progress is good and occasionally outstanding.

Marking is regular and thorough, with an emphasis on motivating learning, but it does not always give pupils a clear idea of what they need to do to improve their work. The school has developed useful target-setting systems to involve pupils in assessing their own progress. As a result, most pupils have an accurate view of their own strengths and areas for development and of what they need to do to get better, although some have yet to develop the independence and self-reliance to enable them to take the initiative in improving as learners.

Teachers plan interesting activities and every lesson has a clear goal. Teaching and learning is usefully guided by detailed plans which ensure that pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum. The school has been successful in integrating a significant number of new staff members into the team and in embedding and consolidating common

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working practices. Nevertheless, there are still inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of pupils' achievement that are impacting on the rates at which some pupils learn.

Pupils enjoy coming to this caring school. They were keen to tell inspectors about the interesting things they do and said that, 'we make sure that people love each other, even if they've had a bad hair day'. Attendance has improved significantly and is now good. Pupils feel safe because of the good care, guidance and support provided by adults.

The highly effective governing body is very knowledgeable about the schools' strengths and areas for development and sensitive to the needs of the community it serves. Governors demonstrate a high degree of commitment to their role and are justifiably proud of the advances that the school has made.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve attainment and progress throughout Key Stage 2 by making better use of assessment information to target work more closely to pupils' needs, especially those of boys in English.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning by ensuring that expectations of achievement are consistently high across the school.
- Increase the range of learning opportunities so that all pupils become increasingly independent and self-reliant as learners.

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

The work seen in lessons and in pupils' books confirms that attainment is broadly average by the time pupils reach Year 6. Most pupils are making at least satisfactory progress during their time in school and some, particularly those at the upper end of Key Stage 2 and in Key Stage 1, make good progress. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are given suitable extra help, so that they make satisfactory progress towards their individual learning targets. The school has introduced effective systems to track pupils' progress and this has resulted in better-targeted teaching and rising attainment, although certain groups of pupils, notably boys, continue to attain less well in aspects of English. Overall, pupils develop satisfactory, and improving, literacy and numeracy skills.

Pupils are well motivated and try hard in most lessons because of the interesting activities that teachers prepare for them. For example, in a mathematics lesson, young pupils who were sorting numbers were sufficiently keen and confident to move from ordering tens and units to hundreds and even thousands. However, activities are not always well matched to pupils' differing learning needs and, as a result, some pupils do not learn quickly enough. In another mathematics lesson, for example, less able pupils struggled to understand the work, while others found the task too easy and rapidly lost concentration. The school has rightly decided to prioritise the way some subjects are taught and the new girl- and boy-only groupings have been designed to boost performance.

Behaviour is satisfactory. There is no evidence of disruption in lessons, but some pupils are less considerate to each other in the corridors and playground.

Positive, respectful and caring relationships between staff and pupils result in good attendance and a readiness to learn. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness

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is good. They are tolerant and understanding of each others' views. As one said, 'Even though we are different colours, we don't bully each other'. Pupils enjoy taking part in a wide range of social and cultural activities, enthusiastically describing their residential visits and a recent day out to the Houses of Parliament. The School Council is proud that its initiative to control parking in the vicinity of the school has been adopted by the governing body.

Pupils make a good contribution to the local community and many are involved extensively in charitable work. The school has developed an imaginative approach to encouraging pupils' entrepreneurial skills. This includes a careers convention, fruit shop vendors and class shopkeeping. In conjunction with visits from professionals and links to local businesses, pupils have opportunities to take responsibility for the operation and budget management of the school through the School Council and Eco Council. They are well supported in developing the skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being. The school has gained a number of awards and accreditations, such as the Eco Silver Award, BECTA Next Generation Learning (ICT) and RHS Gardening Level 3 award. Its accreditation as a Healthy School affirms pupils' adoption of good, healthy, lifestyles.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?**

Most teachers make clear what each lesson is about and use their secure subject knowledge to provide a range of interesting activities. ICT is well used to support teaching

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and allows pupils to extend their learning. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning and well-being and make a satisfactory contribution to their progress. Pupil assessment and tracking systems are accurate and detailed and provide a useful foundation on which to plan next steps. Despite the quality and range of this information, it is not always well used to adapt the curriculum to pupils' differing learning needs. As a result, pupils' misunderstanding or lack of confidence in aspects of their work are not always systematically addressed and tasks are occasionally too easy or too difficult for some.

The school has a broad and balanced curriculum, enriched by a satisfactory range of additional activities. Pupils enjoy a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, for which there is a high degree of take-up. The 'Learning Journey' cross-curricular programmes of study are effectively structured and coordinated. Themes including 'Wicked Writers', Community and Arts Weeks contribute positively to pupils' enjoyment of their work. Stone St. Mary's Church of England Primary School is a deeply caring school that has developed strong and effective pastoral support for all its pupils.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Under the dedicated and high-quality direction of the headteacher, the leadership team has acted successfully to address a legacy of underperformance. This work is not yet completed, but pupils' attainment and progress maintain a rising trend. Periodic checks of lesson planning and of work in pupils' books, augmented by lesson observations, coupled with an uncompromising approach to raising the quality of teaching have resulted in improved provision and accelerating learning.

Well-developed mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of the school underpin sharply-focused improvement plans. Self-evaluation is broadly accurate and there is a shared and realistic understanding of the school's priorities for development. All staff and governors subscribe to the leadership team's strategic vision for the school and are committed to its achievement. The governors have made good arrangements to ensure the safety and welfare of staff and pupils. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding arrangements were found to be good.

Partnerships with other schools and external agencies are good. Exceptional attention is given to keeping parents and carers informed and involved in the work of the school, through initiatives like 'Online Reporting to Parents'. As a result, the school has a highly positive relationship with all groups of parents and carers and the great majority of those responding to the questionnaire were highly appreciative of the school's work. The school

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is mindful of the different cultural and ethnic groups it serves and ensures that there is no discrimination or inequality. Action to promote community cohesion is good and pupils acknowledge and value the culture and heritage of their peers, and of those in their local and national communities and beyond.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The majority of children join the school working at levels that are above those expected for their age group. Children work together happily and sensibly and are good at taking the initiative in their learning. As a result of carefully-planned and stimulating topics and activities, such as the 'Pirate Ship' the cafe and the hairdressers, children's interests are well stimulated and they make good progress in their learning. Improvements to the school's physical environment since the last inspection have ensured that children now enjoy a wide range of outdoor experiences, which complement their development as learners.

Members of staff successfully enable children to become confident, well-behaved and purposeful learners. Assessment is used well to identify gaps in their learning, and the curriculum is skilfully adapted to meet their needs. Effective leaders regularly monitor the progress of individuals and groups and carefully analyse this information to ensure that children make good progress. The school recognises that girls outperform boys, particularly in the development of communication, language and literacy skills. As a result, learning is carefully themed to capture the imagination and engagement of the boys, although this has yet to impact significantly on their progress. Links with home are strong and parents are very pleased with the way their children are inducted into school.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 overwhelming majority of parents and carers are pleased with every aspect of their child's experience at the school. A small minority of parents and carers, while agreeing that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour, commented that their child had been affected by the misbehaviour of others.

The inspection team found that, during the inspection, pupils' behaviour was satisfactory and the school was well placed to deal with those very few pupils who had yet to learn what constituted unacceptable behaviour and to regulate their own actions accordingly.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stone St. Mary's C of E 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 100 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 332 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	66	66	28	28	4	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	67	33	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	52	52	48	48	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	53	44	44	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	60	60	39	39	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	56	42	42	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	50	48	48	1	1	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)	37	37	51	51	5	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	48	49	49	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	47	48	48	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	43	51	51	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	68	68	29	29	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	68	29	29	1	1	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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 Stone St. Mary's Church of England Primary School, Greenhithe, DA9 9EF**

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly during our visit. We can understand why you enjoy coming to school, because it is a safe, welcoming and caring place, where you are well looked after. We found that your school gives you a satisfactory and improving education.

Here are some of the best things about your school.

- You enjoy school and are good at keeping safe and healthy.
- You do really well in the Reception and Key Stage 1 classes and are getting better in Key Stage 2.
- The adults are kind and caring and plan interesting things for you to do.
- Very few of you have time off school.
- The school works extremely well with your parents and carers to make sure you do well.

These are the things we have asked your school to do next to improve

- Help you make more progress in Key Stage 2, especially by the boys in English, by making sure the work is neither too hard nor too easy for you.
- Ensure that all the teachers expect you to work as hard as you can.
- Help you to be smarter learners, so you can help yourself get better without having to be told.

Thank you again for talking to us about your school and showing us your work. You can help your teachers by making sure you always listen carefully to their advice about how you can do better work.

Yours sincerely

Richard Potts

Lead Inspector

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