

Stalham Community Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120854
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358859
Inspection dates	9–10 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracey Bailes
Headteacher	Joan Edwards
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspection team visited 10 lessons and observed three teachers. Inspectors spoke to parents informally before school, held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring, such as lesson observations, and analyses of pupils' work and other assessment information. The inspection team scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by the parents and carers of 24 pupils, and by staff.

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

- What is the school doing to ensure that more pupils attain the higher levels in writing and mathematics?
- How effectively does marking show pupils how to improve their work?
- How well does the school use data to measure the impact of initiatives and analyse the progress of different groups of pupils?

Information about the school

Stalham Community Infant School is a very small school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those that have a statement of special educational needs, is above average. The school has Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award.

A children's centre has premises on the school site. The Reception class shares a building with a privately run pre-school, which is subject to separate inspection.

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

Stalham Community Infant school provides its pupils with a satisfactory level of education. The school is popular with parents and carers, and recent developments in promoting outdoor education have been successful in inspiring pupils and contributing to their enjoyment of school. Progress is satisfactory from starting points in line with expectations, so that by the end of Year 2 levels of attainment are broadly average. However, too few pupils attain the higher levels in writing and mathematics. This is because more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Furthermore, there are gaps in the performance of girls and boys, with some girls making slower progress in mathematics and some boys in reading.

Pupils say they feel safe at school, and this view is strongly supported by the majority of parents and carers. The school council ensures that the site is secure, and pupils have a good understanding of dealing with potential risks that may arise. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles well, taking part in a wide variety of sports and cooking the vegetables that they grow themselves. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community, eagerly taking on responsibilities, for example as buddy partners, and joining in with village life by taking part in the Remembrance Day service and singing to older people at Christmas.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although there are good elements, particularly in the positive relationships that exist between pupils and adults and the way learning is linked to curriculum topics. Pupils have wide opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of contexts, and planning ensures that much of their work is focused on real-life outcomes, such as designing a nature trail. Teaching is less effective in promoting pupils' independence, or involving them sufficiently in assessing the quality of their own or others' work. Marking is often done with the pupil, but there is little written evidence in books of what was said, or what the next steps in learning should be to help them achieve their individual targets.

The impact of leaders and managers in driving improvement is satisfactory. Too much of this work falls to the headteacher, who also has a teaching responsibility. Roles are not sufficiently clearly defined to ensure there is a whole-school approach to improving progress and raising attainment. This means that monitoring sometimes is not rigorous enough, and that data are not used effectively enough to measure the impact of initiatives on pupils' progress, or to check how different groups of pupils are performing. The governing body is supportive, but not sufficiently focused on improving provision to ensure good outcomes for all pupils. Self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory, but not always robust, leading to some over-generous assessments of aspects of the school's performance. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection, and there is a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

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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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress in mathematics and writing by:
 - ensuring more pupils achieve the higher levels
 - closing the gaps in performance between boys in reading and girls in mathematics.
- Ensure all teaching is consistently good by:
 - planning work that challenges all pupils
 - promoting pupils' independence and assessment of their own and others' work
 - showing pupils how to improve and reach their individual targets through marking.
- Develop a whole-school approach to improving leadership and management, including the leadership of the governing body, by:
 - clearly defining all leaders' and governors' roles and responsibilities
 - focusing the drive for improvement on pupils' progress and attainment
 - refining the use of data to measure the impact of initiatives and evaluate the performance of different groups of pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy learning because tasks are interesting and relevant to them, often linked to the topic they are studying, such as owls. For example, pupils in Year 1 researched facts about owls before writing sentences and illustrating them to form a class information book that they would share with the Reception children. The visit of three owls during the inspection proved a huge success. Pupils enjoyed learning more about them and having the opportunity to hold them. Pupils in Year 2 discussed with a teaching assistant how they might record their observations of birds from the school hide to produce a graph of the numbers seen. Much work is undertaken with adults in small groups, but pupils have less experience of working independently, or solving problems among themselves.

The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory, as they also benefit from valuable support from the school's experienced team of teaching assistants. However, there is not enough detailed analysis of the impact of measures to support them, and targets are set through discussion between staff rather than based on robust data. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not sufficiently involved in setting their own individual targets, or measuring their progress in meeting them. Their targets are, however, shared with parents and carers.

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. While most pupils behave well, at times pupils are slow to move from one activity to another, or they call out in class, interrupting the teacher and their classmates. The school's consistently good attendance highlights how much pupils enjoy learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils loved making Chinese dragons to celebrate Chinese New Year, especially when they paraded

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down the High Street and brought the town to a standstill. Their spiritual development is awakened by the experiences they have of the outdoors through a series of well-planned and skilfully executed activities, including a night walk in the woods, and toasting marshmallows over a camp fire. The school equips pupils satisfactorily for their move to junior school, having broadly average basic skills.

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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	3
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?

Pupils show enthusiasm in lessons and are eager to take part, although occasionally some become too excitable. Teachers plan for a wide range of abilities, but sometimes do not challenge the more able pupils, in particular, sufficiently well. Expectations are not always high enough of what pupils can do and achieve, and this has meant that fewer pupils than average have attained the higher levels in writing and mathematics. The school has put measures in place to tackle this, giving special attention to those pupils considered capable of attaining Level 3. This work is beginning to have a positive impact, and evidence suggests that an average number of pupils are more likely to attain the higher levels this year. Pupils receive plenty of verbal feedback, but few written comments to show them how to improve or to measure how well they are meeting their targets.

The curriculum is lively and engaging, and planned well to interest pupils. It promotes their personal qualities well, encouraging cooperation and team-building. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to work independently. The thematic approach makes

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learning relevant for pupils, enabling them to gain knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Year 2, for example, explained with gusto how an owl digests, and subsequently regurgitates, its food. There is a good uptake of the many clubs available, and regular visitors, such as a Chinese family, who share something of their culture with pupils. Good care, guidance and support stem from the fact that pupils are very well known to staff and treated as individuals. Potentially vulnerable pupils receive particularly sensitive support, which boosts their confidence and self-esteem. There is good promotion of attendance, eliminating persistent absence. The links with the children's centre enable families to access additional services. Satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to make steady progress.

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?

The headteacher has a clear set of values for infant education that are embraced by the whole school community. This gives the school its very positive ethos and contributes to its popularity among parents and carers. Typically, one commented, 'My child is always happy and looks forward to going to school.' The school has worked hard to raise boys' attainment in mathematics through introducing a more practical approach and unlocking specialist vocabulary. The impact of this work is satisfactory. Monitoring is regular but not always sufficiently rigorous to bring about accelerated progress. Leaders and managers analyse well how individual pupils perform, but have little experience of looking at how different groups of pupils are doing. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body struggles to attract parent governors, in particular, and has several vacancies. While governors support the school well, the information they receive is sometimes insufficient, and makes it difficult for them to ask the searching questions that would hold leaders and managers to account. The school engages well with parents and carers, keeping them well informed and responding to their suggestions, such as setting up activity mornings. Very close links with the privately run pre-school ensure a smooth transition into Reception. Other effective partnerships include those with the speech therapist, the parent support adviser and the sports partnership. The school has good links with the junior school and uses its site for woodland discovery.

While all pupils are included well, and there is no discrimination, inconsistencies in the provision mean equality is satisfactory overall. The school is actively trying to close gaps between the performance of girls and boys in different subjects. All requirements for safeguarding arrangements are met, including the safer recruitment of staff. Community cohesion is promoted well, with a link established with an inner-city school to help pupils experience different cultures. There is a clear action plan based on a thorough analysis of

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the local context, and links with children in Australia and the Isle of Mull give other perspectives.

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	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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception class with skills and abilities in line with those expected. They make satisfactory progress and enter Year 1 with attainment that is broadly average. A good imaginative curriculum makes learning enjoyable for children, with interesting tasks linked to their topic. This takes account of their aspirations, leading to the role-play area becoming, for example, a flying club. Children enjoyed dramatising the story of the 'Owl Babies' with home-made wings, accompanying themselves with musical instruments.

The balance between adult-led activities and those chosen by the children themselves tilts more towards the former. Where children do have the opportunity to select their own activities, these do not always have a clear purpose, especially outside. Careful assessments take place, which include photographs of pupils' achievements and longer observations of their activity. 'Learning journeys' give a good overview of children's progress over time, but are not sufficiently linked to aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage profile. Children and their parents and carers enjoy looking at them.

There are very strong links with the privately run pre-school, and staff work together effectively to ensure smooth transition into Reception.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A smaller than usual proportion of questionnaires were returned by parents and carers. They are mostly positive about the school, all agreeing that their children are happy and enjoy school, make sufficient progress and have a good understanding about healthy lifestyles. Inspectors found that while most of these statements are true, there is some variation in the progress that different pupils make. A few parents and carers queried the extent to which the school helps them to support their children's learning, but inspectors found that the school does this well, running curriculum workshops for parents and carers and encouraging them to get involved.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stalham Community Infant 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 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 64 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	75	6	25	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	63	8	33	1	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	11	46	12	50	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	67	8	33	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	71	6	25	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	54	9	38	2	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	50	12	50	0	0	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)	10	42	10	42	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	58	10	42	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	38	12	50	1	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	50	10	42	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	42	13	54	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	63	9	38	0	0	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	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.



11 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stalham Community Infant School, Norwich, NR12 9DG

Thank you for sharing your views with us when we visited your school recently. Stalham Community Infant School is satisfactory, which means it does some things well and could improve in others. You told us you enjoy your lessons, and like finding out about owls and Chinese New Year. Here are some of the good things about the school.

You say you feel safe at school, and you take plenty of exercise.

You are keen to help around the school and to get involved in the local community.

Your attendance is good.

You have a good understanding of other cultures, and know a lot about how other people live.

There are plenty of interesting things for you to do, with a good number of clubs and visitors.

The school cares for you well, especially if you are having difficulties.

The school is good at linking with your parents and carers, other partners and the community in general.

We think more of you could reach the higher levels in writing and mathematics, so we have asked your teachers to make sure the work really makes you think. We have asked them to help boys do even better in reading and girls do even better in mathematics, because there are some gaps appearing. We think you could do more of your work independently without an adult sitting with you and have asked your teachers to write in your books how you can improve your work. We have asked everyone to work together to check how well the school is doing, so that you do as well as you can.

All of you can help by telling your teachers how you think you could improve in your learning and doing your best. We send our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead inspector

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