

Stratford-sub-Castle Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	126361
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	381217
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Lead inspector	Jill Bavin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Angi Britten
Headteacher	Kay Bridson
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jill Bavin

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed nine lessons, taught by five teachers and made five additional visits to classes to focus on provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The inspector also met with pupils, members of staff and members of the governing body, listened to pupils read and examined work in pupils' books. A variety of documentation related to safeguarding, data about pupils' progress, monitoring and evaluation records, and school development plans was scrutinised. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Questionnaire responses from pupils, staff and 81 parents and carers were analysed during the inspection.

Information about the school

This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils in the Reception Year are taught in one class, but pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught in mixed-age classes. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language, far fewer than is typical nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is well above average. Most of these pupils have difficulties related to language, communication and social skills. A far higher proportion of pupils join and leave the school between Reception and Year 6 than is usual in primary schools.

More than half the teachers have joined the school since the previous inspection in 2009. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The second day of the inspection was a 'Dads in School Day'.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is well led and managed. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff share high ambitions for every pupil whatever their circumstances or the challenges they face. They are ably supported by the governing body in pursuing further school improvement. It is not an outstanding school because teaching and achievement are good, rather than outstanding.
- All groups of pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, achieve well from their varied starting points. Pupils make good use of literacy, numeracy and other key skills across the curriculum. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to use their literacy targets to support their learning in different subjects and to better record the strategies they use in mathematics to find their answers.
- Teaching is good because throughout the school teachers know their pupils' academic needs well. They plan effectively to meet the varying abilities of pupils in their class but on occasions opportunities for pupils to work independently are not capitalised on. Teaching for children in Reception is good because the staff team has a good understanding of how to meet the needs of young children. However, next steps planned for Reception children vary in their usefulness, because they are not all equally clear and measurable.
- Pupils behave well. They are welcoming of pupils new to the school and quickly form relationships and friendships as classmates come and go. They have positive attitudes to learning and typically behave well in lessons. They report that bullying of any kind is very rare. Attendance is above average.
- Leaders at different levels have an accurate and realistic understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for development. They share the headteacher's ambition for continuing school improvement. Effective leadership of teaching and management of performance have improved the proportion and consistency of good teaching throughout the school but the school has identified the need to further improve its feedback procedures to teachers after lesson observations.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school so that much is outstanding by:
 - giving pupils more consistent opportunities to record their mathematical strategies in books
 - sharing user-friendly literacy targets with pupils more routinely in other subjects, and ensuring that the next steps planned for children in Reception are always clear and measurable
 - giving pupils, particularly the more able, greater opportunities to work independently sooner in lessons
 - providing feedback to teachers which always focuses on the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Lesson observations during the inspection confirmed parents' and carers' positive views regarding their children's good achievements. Boys and girls, including those who join the school after the Reception Year and higher attaining pupils, make good progress in their learning in lessons and over time. Pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress, as do those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language. Assessment information, specially tailored resources and the deployment of well-briefed teaching assistants, combine to provide effective support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result, these pupils also make good progress.

Typically children join the Reception Year with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are significantly below those expected for their age. They make good progress because of the good focus on promoting their social and emotional development as well as key literacy and numeracy skills. This was exemplified during the inspection when children in the Reception class made good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds to record which dinosaurs they had found hidden in the school grounds, while working alongside their dads. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school. Typically they reach closer to expected levels of attainment, though below average, in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Attainment is broadly average in these areas by the end of Year 6.

The school successfully promotes pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Pupils mostly remain purposeful when they are working independently, especially in the older classes. Pupils are interested in reading and in books. Those pupils who struggle to read more complex words understand and apply the basic principles of linking

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sounds with letters. During the inspection there were examples of pupils who had made rapid progress in developing confidence and skills in reading, enabling them to express emerging opinions about authors such as Roald Dahl.

Rates of progress are similar in English and mathematics. On occasion, pupils make exceptional progress over a short period of time. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 made impressive gains in extending their vocabulary and selecting language such as 'squeaking sarcophagus' for a particular effect, while producing poetry inspired by Roger McGough's, *The Sound Collector*. Learning was further enhanced by adding a historical dimension, as pupils wrote to the title, *The Pharaoh Sound Collector*, and used computer technology skills to search for further inspiration.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is typically good throughout the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage where tasks are exciting and geared to how young children learn best. This confirms the positive view of teaching held by most parents and carers. Teachers and teaching assistants have good relationships with pupils which underpin positive behaviour management. This promotes pupils' positive approach to learning and their good moral and social development. Under the leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, teaching has improved notably and satisfactory teaching has become rare. A key contributory factor is improved planning and use of assessment, which is now consistently detailed and useful. However, teachers do not consistently draw pupils' attention to making best use of their literacy targets when working in different subjects. In addition, staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage do not always make sure that the next steps planned for learning for children are clear and measurable.

The teaching of reading is good because it is structured and systematic. Pupils are grouped according to their abilities within class. The school's plans to group pupils from the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 together according to their needs, are well chosen. They arise from staff evaluating their practice and pupils' learning, and striving for further improvement. Sessions focusing on reading skills continue for as long as a pupil needs them.

Teaching is outstanding when pupils of all abilities are equally challenged throughout lessons which begin at a cracking pace. This was illustrated when older pupils worked in pairs to plan, budget for and construct a weight-bearing bridge over a 40 centimetre 'canyon'. On occasion, opportunities to challenge higher attaining pupils are missed because they remain with their classmates longer than necessary for initial introductions and explanations.

The planned curriculum supports pupils' varying needs well. Since the previous inspection staff have planned for greater links between subjects that add interest and improve learning opportunities for pupils. Topics, for example Leonardo Da Vinci for older pupils and 'Castles and Cathedrals' for younger pupils, make a good

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contribution to pupils' cultural and spiritual knowledge and understanding. They also provide good opportunities for boys and girls to write creatively and develop their ideas at length. Boys' interest in writing and their willingness to write has improved over recent years. The mathematics curriculum is planned with a greater emphasis on practical activities than previously and pupils have good opportunities to identify different approaches to solving mathematical problems. However, pupils record their strategies on whiteboards more often than in books, and so are not always able to refer back to them.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour is good over time. A higher percentage of parents and carers returned inspection questionnaires and most agreed that behaviour in school is good. There was unanimous agreement that pupils are well looked after and the vast majority agreed that their child felt safe. The school recognises that several pupils exhibit challenging behaviour, especially when they first arrive at the school. Staff and pupils identify several success stories which illustrate the successful management of such pupils with justifiable pride, and exclusions are very rare.

Pupils report that the school's approach to 'nipping disagreements in the bud' is effective because the worst behaviour they are likely to encounter at break times is 'falling out' or verbal 'teasing', which staff address promptly. Pupils identified the worst behaviour to be found in lessons would probably be being 'cheeky' to the teacher, but did not feel this was very common. Pupils themselves say that behaviour is good, that they feel safe and that bullying, of any form, is rare. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying including cyber-bullying and racist comments. However, pupils from all groups represented in the school were completely confident in the school's ability to deal with any issues should they arise.

The curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to explore ways in which they can keep themselves safe. These include practical activities such as cycling proficiency training, but also, for example, writing about the benefits of being able to swim. Opportunities such as these contribute to pupils' good knowledge and understanding of how to make safe choices. Children in the Reception class share positive attitudes to learning with their older schoolmates. They enthusiastically embrace new experiences, for example making dinosaur eggs, and relish work that requires their concentration, exclaiming enthusiastically, 'It's a challenge!'

Leadership and management

The headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, leads with passion. The governing body and staff share with them high ambitions for the school and a realistic appraisal of its strengths and priorities for further development. Since the previous inspection the senior leadership team, well supported by staff and the governing body, has successfully driven several school improvements. Most significantly they have increased the equality of opportunity for pupils by improving

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attendance rates and improving the quality of teaching and levels of achievement for all groups of pupils. These factors have successfully closed previous gaps between rates of progress for different groups of pupils and between Stratford-sub-Castle pupils and pupils nationally. That said, while professional development for staff has successfully improved teaching, written feedback to teachers does not always make clear the impact they are having on pupils' learning.

The curriculum has retained previous strengths and developed further. The curriculum for children in the Reception class is much improved. Children have more opportunities to make choices, to explore areas of interest to them and to work inside or outdoors. This is having a positive impact on their social development and development of key skills. Strengths in personal, social and health education remain and contribute to the effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Previous strengths in keeping pupils safe have been sustained and the governing body's and school leaders' arrangements for safeguarding pupils continue to meet requirements. Staff are particularly knowledgeable about child protection issues. School leaders and staff work together equally well to ensure that any form of discrimination is tackled rigorously. The school's track record of sustained strengths and further development indicate its good capacity for continued development.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



23 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stratford-sub-Castle Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Salisbury SP1 3LL

Thank you very much for being so friendly when I visited your school recently. I should like to say a special thank you to those pupils who read to me, showed me their work, talked to me and completed a questionnaire.

I understand why you enjoy school as much as you do and why your parents and carers appreciate it so much. You attend a good school where you make good progress in English and mathematics. You help by attending more regularly than most pupils of your age and by behaving so well in lessons and around school. This helps everybody to feel safe and ready to learn. It was good to see you enjoying learning and working hard in lessons. The governing body, headteacher, deputy headteacher and teachers work well together and want to keep making your school even better. I have asked them to improve your learning even further by:

- giving you more opportunities to record your mathematical problem solving strategies in books – you can help by referring back to them
- helping you to use your literacy targets more often on a day-to-day basis in different subjects
- making sure that the targets staff plan for children in Reception are always clear and easy to check
- giving those of you who find learning easier more independence and challenge from the very beginning of lessons
- making sure that teachers are told by the headteacher how much they help you to learn and what they need to do to be even better.

I hope you continue to enjoy learning and I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin
Lead inspector

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