

South Stanley Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114030
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	357469
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christine Weightman
Headteacher	Mrs Heather Kemp
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 lessons taught by six teachers. Discussions were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, governors, staff and the School Improvement Partner. They looked at samples of pupils' work, and a range of documentation was scrutinised including the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, monitoring records, school improvement planning, risk assessments and other documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils. The questionnaires received from staff and 30 parents and carers were analysed and considered.

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

- The attainment of boys to determine whether the curriculum is well enough adjusted to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The progress of pupils in Key Stage 1 to determine whether teaching is consistently good in both key stages.
- The impact of low attendance on pupil outcomes and the success of actions taken by the school to bring about improvement.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average infant and nursery school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The vast majority of pupils are from a White British background. There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection. The school has a number of awards, including the Anti-bullying award, the Global Citizen Certificate, Healthy School status and Active Mark award.

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

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. This improving school has several good elements to its work. Staff have a very secure understanding of the community which the school serves and have worked hard to engage parents and carers and to raise the aspirations of its pupils. The school is a cohesive community where pupils feel safe because safeguarding arrangements are good. Pupils are provided with a rich variety of experiences and are developing a good understanding of how they can make a positive contribution to the world in which they live.

The school is accurate in its self-evaluation, checks on its effectiveness well and has implemented a number of successful changes in order to successfully drive forward an agenda of improvement. The school's good capacity to sustain this improvement is evident in many areas. Children continue to make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from generally very low starting points on entry. The well-planned introduction of a creative curriculum aimed at capturing the interest and imagination of boys is working well, resulting in the gap in the attainment of boys and girls closing at a good rate. Good partnerships with other agencies ensure timely interventions for those pupils who need additional support. Specialised programmes to improve listening, speech and language and to develop learning through movement are targeted well and are raising attainment. As a result pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. The amount of good teaching is increasing and pupil progress is improving strongly. However, monitoring by leaders and managers does not always focus rigorously enough on the impact that teaching has on pupil progress. Consequently, although satisfactory overall, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning remain in some lessons, leading to inconsistent progress by pupils in some lessons in Key Stage 1. This, together with a legacy of past underachievement, means that attainment in Year 2 in writing and mathematics remains low.

Despite this low attainment, in many other respects, pupils are prepared soundly for the future. They develop good social skills and have a secure understanding of how to use a range of modern technology. Close attention to helping pupils understand the relationship between letters and the sounds they make is improving spelling throughout the school. A further contributing factor to the low attainment of some pupils, however, is their poor attendance. The school is applying a range of strategies to raise this and is having some success, for example, the percentage of pupils who are persistently absent has fallen by more than 50% in the last year.

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.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 from satisfactory to at least good, particularly in writing and mathematics by:
 - teachers using assessment information to plan activities which build upon pupils' prior knowledge and skill
 - teachers carefully checking throughout lessons how well pupils are doing and providing additional support or challenge in order to maintain good progress
 - providing pupils with sufficient opportunity to put new learning into practice
 - leaders and managers having a sharp focus on the impact of provision on outcomes for pupils when monitoring lessons.
- Raise levels of attendance by broadening still further the strategies to engage parents and carers of pupils who do not attend school regularly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Most pupils thoroughly enjoy school and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are aware of the importance of healthy lifestyles. They make full use of the range of opportunities to be active both within and outside school and most take advantage of the well-balanced lunches that are provided. Pupils enjoy their many responsibilities around the school, for example, as buddies and members of the school and Eco council. The majority of pupils are attentive in lessons, behave well and display good attitudes to learning. They grow in confidence and self-esteem as they engage with activities and develop positive relationships with adults. From the very early stages of their education, they demonstrate pride in their achievements and there is a real sense of shared pleasure when a new skill is mastered.

Children generally join the Early Years Foundation Stage with very low levels of skill, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their personal and emotional development. Through the targeted efforts of the school, children begin to learn how to overcome significant emotional and communication difficulties but their attainment remains well below average by the time they enter Year 1. In Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress overall but continue to make good progress in the development of their reading skills. Strategies to improve boys' motor-skills and to increase their enthusiasm for learning have ensured that there is very little difference in attainment between girls and boys in the current Year 1. In this year group, school data show that progress is improving rapidly. Pupils in the current Year 2 have not had the same amount of time to experience the full range of intervention strategies. As a result, in this cohort, more boys are behind with their learning. Pupils' language and communication difficulties continue to limit the range of vocabulary they are able to use in their writing. Although pupils make satisfactory progress in their mathematical knowledge, their ability to record hinders rapid progress. For example, they often transpose numbers and make simple basic errors in calculation owing to poor presentation. Consequently, attainment by the end of Year 2 remains low overall. A strength of the school is the early identification of those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the action taken to address their identified barriers to learning. Pupils are set challenging targets and provision to help

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them meet their targets is carefully planned and monitored. As a result they make good progress.

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	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	4
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 have secure subject knowledge and basic concepts are soundly taught. Teachers manage pupils well and for the most part provide interesting and varied learning contexts. In some lessons however, pupils are expected to spend too long listening to their teachers and have insufficient opportunity to put new knowledge into practice. This is most evident in mathematics and is one reason why pupils do not progress at a faster rate. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils, both in the teaching part of the lesson and when they are working independently. This contributes to the good progress made by those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning and progress over time is thorough. For the most part, information gained from good assessment procedures, is used by teachers to provide different activities for pupils of varying abilities, although this is not consistent in all classes. Assessment of how well pupils are doing during lessons is not yet fully secure. Teachers do not always recognise that although different, the activities they have planned do not require pupils to use different levels of knowledge or skill. As a result some pupils find work too easy and others too difficult. Teachers do not always recognise this quickly enough to adjust tasks and ensure pupils make consistently good progress.

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The school has worked effectively to develop a creative curriculum that meets the needs of individuals and provides memorable experiences while linking different subjects together. This motivates pupils to learn and speeds up their progress. For example, information and communication technology skills are developing well. Whole school topics such as 'castles' introduce pupils well to other lives in the past and to cultures and experiences different from their own. Pupils respond particularly well to practical activities. They especially enjoy the visits outside school and activities which take place with visitors, such as the sports coach. In some mathematics lessons, an over use of work sheets limits pupils' opportunities to investigate and discover how different aspects of the subject can link together.

Adults provide good support for the social and emotional development of all pupils, including those with challenging behaviour. The school has strong evidence to show that this has a significant impact upon the future life-chances of many of its pupils. Good links with a range of other agencies ensure pupils' specific medical and learning needs are met well. Those who are potentially most vulnerable and, as a consequence, find learning difficult, follow a structured nurture programme which is helping to build self-confidence, team working skills and pupils' ability to manage their own behaviour.

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 is fully committed to involving governors and staff at all levels in the self-evaluation process. Staff have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and have been proactive in bringing about improvements in order to improve pupil progress, for example, through curriculum creativity. The governing body are well led and organised by an astute and knowledgeable chair of governors. They are providing good support and challenge by becoming increasingly involved in monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the school. Rigorous analysis provides the school with good information about the progress of different groups of pupils. Staff are beginning to use this information towards ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to make good progress. However, systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, although satisfactory, do not yet sufficiently focus on whether provision brings about pupils' consistently good achievement.

The school is aware of the difficulties faced by potentially vulnerable pupils and their families and uses a variety of means, including coffee mornings, pamper days and other informal meetings, to engage parents and carers in supporting their children's learning. This has contributed strongly to the improvement seen in the amount of persistent

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absence. However, there is still much to be done to raise overall attendance to average levels. There are good arrangements for keeping pupils safe and staff have a clear understanding of child protection procedures. The health and well-being of pupils are regularly monitored and the school follows all recommended good practice.

The school's contribution to building a cohesive community within and beyond its own population is strong. Through a detailed audit of its provision the school has put in place plans to further improve each strand of community cohesion. This helps to ensure that staff provide varied experiences for pupils to understand and engage with other religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups and deepen their understanding and tolerance of those who are different from themselves.

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	3
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	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

A stimulating curriculum and good teaching ensure children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The bright, welcoming classrooms provide an inspiring environment for children. The strong focus on developing children's language, personal and basic skills gives children a good start to their education. Assessment is used well to plan activities that meet the needs of children, and all six areas of learning are evident both indoors and outside. Adults strike a good balance between more formal, adult-led activities and those that children select for themselves. Children confidently make decisions and choices. They eagerly enter into discussion about their learning: one child beamed with pleasure when asked to describe her picture related to the forthcoming royal wedding and was extremely proud when the teacher suggested it be placed in the class art gallery. Particularly good use is made of role-play areas to encourage children to develop their creativity, imagination and social and communication skills. Staff are always on hand to offer support or to model speaking and listening, seizing every opportunity to

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enrich and extend children's vocabulary and wider communication skills. Children's welfare is given a high priority and carefully planned transition means they settle quickly and well. Routines are quickly established and this increases children's feeling of safety in and around the unit. Leadership and management are effective and focused well on improvement. A strong team ethos has been established. Record keeping is thorough and children's progress is closely observed but there is scope to improve the way in which this information is used to measure children's attainment and progress.

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

A smaller than average percentage of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Most are pleased with the provision made by the school and recognise the school's strengths in the way their children are helped to enjoy being at school, and to stay safe and lead healthy lifestyles. Inspection evidence supports these positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at South Stanley Infant and Nursery 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 30 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 163 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	47	16	53	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	50	14	47	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	15	50	14	47	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	60	11	37	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	57	12	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	57	11	37	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	53	13	43	1	3	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)	11	37	15	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	47	15	50	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	50	14	47	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	47	13	43	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	50	13	43	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	53	14	47	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.



23 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Stanley Infant and Nursery School, Stanley, DH9 6PZ

Thank you for the welcome you gave to the inspection team last week. It was lovely to meet you and to see you hard at work. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education but it is improving well and there are several things that are now good. The adults take good care of you and you told me that you feel safe and enjoy your lessons. Your teachers provide you with interesting things to do and it was good to see how keen you were to use the computers to create your own coats of arms. I could see how much you enjoy activities such as throwing and catching the ball when you were working with the sports coach.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and those of you who sometimes find learning difficult make good progress, but for most of you progress is satisfactory. You do well in learning to read but need to work harder at writing and mathematics by practising what you have learnt from your teachers. The people who lead and manage your school are working hard and know what needs to be done to make improvements in the school so that you can do better in all your subjects. To continue this improvement I have asked them to look carefully at your lessons to make sure that what you are taught always helps you to make good progress.

I know how keen you all are to help your class win the 'golden wellie' but some of you do not attend school as often as you should. Your school will keep helping your parents and carers to understand how important it is to your learning that you come to school regularly.

All of you can help to improve your learning by continuing to behave well and always doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Linda Buller

Lead inspector

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