

Standens Barn Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121935
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359122
Inspection dates	19–20 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Jo Curd

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Montgomery
Headteacher	Simon Blight
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Eighteen lessons were observed and twelve teachers seen. Meetings were held with parents, carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at assessment data, pupils' work, local authority inspection reports and the school improvement plan. They analysed 92 questionnaires from parents and carers, 106 from pupils in Key Stage 2 and 14 from staff.

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

- To what extent and why progress varies across the school and whether changes in provision can explain the dip in progress and attainment in 2010
- How effectively leaders and managers, including the governing body, are addressing relative weaknesses they have identified, including the need to improve progress in writing and mathematics.
- How well all pupils use mathematics and writing across the curriculum.

Information about the school

This school is slightly larger than most other primary schools. Three quarters of the pupils from White British backgrounds. The other quarter come from 11 different ethnic groups and use a range of ten different spoken languages. including English, Gujarati, Urdu and Shona as the most widely spoken by pupils. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than in most other schools. The proportion of pupils on the school's special educational needs register, especially at the level of school action, is much higher than in most other schools. A higher proportion of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the start of the Reception year or end of Year 6 compared with most other schools. There has been a change of headteacher, a restructuring of senior management and several changes of teachers since the previous Ofsted 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

This is a satisfactory school, where, overall, all groups of pupils are making satisfactory progress. Pupils are happy and well cared for. They are polite, friendly, confident and well behaved. The vast majority of parents and carers who responded during the inspection are very satisfied with all that the school offers. One expressed the views of most when they said, 'Overall I am very pleased with the school, the staff are approachable and provide good experiences for my son. It is a caring, warm learning environment.'

The diligence of the headteacher and assistant headteacher, the hard work of all staff and the positive attitudes of all stakeholders, including pupils, have successfully contributed to maintaining the school's strengths and positive features through significant changes since the previous inspection. A relative dip in the attainment and progress of Year 6 pupils in 2010 was largely due to their low starting points, mobility of pupils and their additional educational needs rather than significant changes in the school's provision. Leaders are currently reviewing the school's register of pupils with special educational needs as this has not always been accurate and has led to some confusion about the progress of pupils with different levels of need. Overall, all groups are now supported well and are all making satisfactory progress, with some making good progress.

The headteacher and assistant headteacher work particularly well together, have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and share a clear vision of how to take the school forward. They are successfully using accurate self-evaluation to drive improvements, especially in English and mathematics. Progress in writing is improving throughout the school. Some other leaders and managers are relatively new to their roles and are gradually developing their understanding of the school and how it could be improved through discussions and training. However, they are not yet sufficiently involved in monitoring or evaluation to drive the school forward at a sufficiently fast pace. Relatively new assessment procedures clearly show how well all groups of pupils are progressing in reading, writing and mathematics. These are gradually helping all staff to see, understand and be more accountable for the achievement of all pupils throughout the school.

The headteacher and assistant headteacher have monitored lessons in English and mathematics throughout the school. While this has led to improvements in teaching and learning, progress is sometimes slowed because: pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher as a whole group; there is not always sufficient active learning; and tasks are not always sufficiently varied to meet pupil's individual and diverse needs. While there are strengths in the curriculum, including physical education, music and enrichment through clubs, visits and visitors, links between subjects are at an earlier stage of development and opportunities for pupils to write or use mathematics in other subjects are sometimes missed.

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The school's capacity to sustain improvements is satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been steady but limited because too few leaders and managers have been fully involved in monitoring, evaluation and driving developments.

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?

- Develop leadership and management, so that the school improves at a faster and more sustainable pace, by including more staff in monitoring and evaluating a greater range of provision and outcomes.
- Over the next two terms improve teaching and learning by ensuring that pupils have sufficient time for practical work in lessons and that these tasks and activities are suitably challenging for all.
- Improve the curriculum by increasing meaningful links between subjects and providing more opportunities for pupils to write and to use mathematics in a greater range of lessons

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

All groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily overall even though this varies between classes and subjects. Attainment on entry to Year 1 is generally just below the national average, particularly in writing and creative development. By the end of Year 6 attainment is broadly in line with the national averages even though, for various reasons, published results of national tests were lower in 2010. Assessments for current Year 6 pupils indicate that attainment and progress will again be broadly in line with the national average. Until relatively recently teaching and progress have been much stronger in Years 5 and 6 than in other year groups. Improved assessment procedures throughout the school are successfully helping to increase the rate of pupils' progress, especially in reading and mathematics in Years 1 to 4. All pupils including those with English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs, benefit from some good teaching and interesting varied activities. The quality of lessons remains inconsistent however and the progress of all pupils is slowed when they spend too much time as a whole group listening to the teacher and when activities are insufficiently varied to meet their different needs. During the inspection pupils in Years 1 and 2 made excellent progress in an information and communication technology lesson where tasks using programmable equipment were active, practical and suitably varied to meet their diverse learning needs. Progress was slower in an English lesson where all the pupils spent too long listening to the teacher explaining aspects of sentence structure that was already very familiar to some but too complex for others.

Pupils enjoy school. Attendance is above the national average. They are well behaved, polite and considerate. They are effectively motivated by their personal 'BEST' targets, through which they aim to get better at being brave, enthusiastic, safe and thoughtful. Very occasionally behaviour is less appropriate in the playground and when pupils are less actively engaged in lessons. They are keen to help and willingly carry out tasks and responsibilities, such as raising money for charity and counting fund-raising coupons. However, opportunities for all pupils to contribute to the school and particularly the wider

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community are fairly sporadic or limited. Pupils develop a good awareness of and commitment to healthy lifestyles through physical education in lessons and clubs, personal, social and health education lessons and encouragement to eat sensibly and healthily. Pupils are adequately prepared for later life and learning because they develop positive attitudes to work, effective skills of cooperation and teamwork and good relationships with others. Their basic skills, especially in reading, writing and mathematics, are broadly in line with the national averages.

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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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 are well cared for and supported. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and positive, and pupils know that staff are there to look after them and help them. They feel that staff, including the headteacher and especially the family support worker, are very approachable and listen and help them whenever they need it. One parent expressed these views when they said, 'The teachers and headteacher always make themselves available if I need to discuss anything. Most importantly, I feel my child can always go to their teachers with any issues and be made to feel important and valued.' The school has successfully helped those pupils and families, whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable by effectively supporting their social, health and learning needs well. A range of intervention and withdrawal programmes is effectively helping pupils' learning, confidence, self-esteem and well-being.

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The quality of teaching is improving, especially in Years 1 to 4. The majority of lessons seen during the inspection were good even though work in books indicates that this is not always the case. Strengths include relationships, pupils' behaviour and attitudes, effective use of information and communication technology and some interesting activities. Pupils do not always have sufficient time for active involvement or engagement in tasks, however, and these are not always sufficiently well matched to individual learning needs.

Strengths of the curriculum include the many and varied opportunities for physical education and music. The relatively new initiative of 'drama for writing' is proving successful for pupils' motivation, enjoyment and progress. Pupils participate in a range of local sporting and musical events and are often very successful winning awards, trophies and acclaim. Each class is involved in a large-scale music and drama production, which helps self-esteem and confidence and improves relationships with parents and carers. Meaningful links between subjects are at a relatively early stage of development and pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to use mathematics or writing across the various subjects.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and assistant headteacher have a very accurate overview of the school and a clear vision of how to improve and develop it. They are in the process of training other leaders and managers, including some very new members of the governing body, to take a more active role in driving improvements but are currently still conducting most monitoring and evaluation themselves. Some governors are knowledgeable, experienced and very involved in the school. They support and challenge effectively but are not yet directly involved in monitoring and evaluation. The school development plan is well focused on the achievement and well-being of all pupils but is not yet broad enough or sufficiently well embedded throughout the school to ensure that improvements are fast, feasible and sustainable. Lesson monitoring has been almost exclusively on English and mathematics and they have not yet monitored other lessons sufficiently frequently or systematically. However, they have implemented some improvements, such as in assessment procedures and writing, which are proving advantageous for the progress of all pupils. Policies and procedures to safeguard the health and safety of all pupils are effective but not always quite as detailed as they could be.

The school has a good knowledge of its pupils, local community and requirements for community cohesion. Internal cohesion and relationships between pupils within the school are very good. Leaders have not yet implemented all their plans to aid community

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cohesion at a wider level or fully evaluated what they currently do. They are making a satisfactory impact on promoting equality of opportunity and combatting discrimination. Individuals and cultures are accepted, embraced and respected through lessons, visits, visitors and music. However, pupils are not making as much progress as they could and rates continue to vary between classes and year groups.

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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress in their Reception class due to effective teaching and a range of interesting learning activities inside and out. Progress in children's knowledge and understanding of letters and sounds has improved greatly, largely because of increased staff awareness and regular taught sessions. This is particularly true for children who learn more quickly or easily as the structured sessions are sometimes too long for those at earlier stages of learning or development. Opportunities and encouragement for children to use their knowledge of sounds and letters in writing at other times of the day are sometimes limited or missed. Progress in writing skills and creativity remain slower than other areas of learning.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Staff are developing their understanding and organisation of provision and are well trained to meet children's safety and welfare requirements. Assessment records, in the children's 'learning journals', are good quality, detailed and up to date but are not always used as effectively as possible to tailor activities to children's individual needs. There is generally a good balance of time between adult-led and child-chosen activities, even though opportunities to extend language and thought are missed in both. Occasionally, child-initiated activities run on with little adult input or challenge, with the result that some children lose focus and progress slows. There are good links with parents and carers

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through induction events and shared reading sessions even though these are not always fully used to harness their engagement in learning.

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

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire is broadly in line with most other primary schools. The vast majority of these were positive about nearly all aspects of the school. A small minority of parents and carers felt that their children were not making sufficient progress; that the school did not meet their child's particular needs; and that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that progress is inconsistent across the school and that work is not always sufficiently varied to meet pupils' individual needs. All behaviour seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory, most good and some excellent. The vast majority of behaviour observed was managed well even though lower attention and engagement in some lessons persisted because activities were not always sufficiently well matched to specific needs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Standens Barn 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 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 285 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	63	32	35	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	62	67	28	30	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	51	55	37	40	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	54	33	36	7	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	53	58	35	38	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	50	37	40	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	53	40	43	3	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)	43	47	41	45	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	45	44	48	6	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	58	32	35	6	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	41	46	50	2	2	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	52	57	36	39	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	62	31	34	3	3	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Standens Barn Primary School, Northampton, NN3 9EH

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school recently. All the things you told us about your school really helped us in our work.

We agree with you that the school has several strengths, including behaviour, positive relationships and the way you are cared for and supported. We agree that you are safe and that you are developing good attitudes and commitment to healthy lifestyles. Overall, you make steady progress throughout the school. Strengths in teaching and learning include some interesting activities, good use of information and communication technology and the way you all listen and behave. However, you do not always have enough time to get on with tasks as the times you are all together on the carpet are sometimes too long and work is not always well matched to your individual learning needs. You do not always have enough opportunities to use mathematics or write in a range of subjects. Your headteacher and assistant headteacher are working very hard to improve and develop the school. They have looked carefully at English and mathematics lessons and are improving these. However, they have not always involved other staff in looking at what the school does or looked at a sufficiently wide range of lessons to ensure that there are improvements in all that the school does.

We have asked school leaders to improve three things. These are to:

- involve more leaders and managers in looking at what the school does, thinking about this and improving it further for you all
- make sure you have enough time for activities in lessons and that these are suitably challenging for you all
- make sure that there are meaningful links between subjects and enough opportunities for you to use mathematics and writing in all other subjects.

You can all help by continuing to work hard in lessons and telling your teachers what particularly helps you in your learning.

Yours sincerely

Jo Curd

Lead inspector

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