

# Staplehurst School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118313
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	379591
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Cartlidge

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	441
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Claire Wakeling
<b>Headteacher</b>	Annemarie Bolt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13–14 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	Gybbon Rise Staplehurst Tonbridge Kent TN12 0LZ
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	7–8 November 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 17 lessons taught by 16 teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and pupils. The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, information on pupils' progress, safeguarding policies and other documents. Questionnaires from 164 parents and carers, 22 members of staff and 105 pupils were scrutinised.

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

- How provision is increasing the progress of pupils, particularly for girls and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, especially in mathematics and writing.
- How well teaching and the use of assessment meet differing needs and are moving learning forward.
- The impact of leaders, including subject leaders, on continuity in teaching and learning.
- How well members of staff work as a team to help pupils to enjoy school and to make rapid progress in reading.

## Information about the school

This is a much larger-than-average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a few coming from other backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The school has a below-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils have a range of needs, including speech, language and communication difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school has received several awards, including the National Healthy School Award. The school has increased in size since the previous inspection and there have been several changes in staffing, including of senior leaders, in the past two years. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes. There is a high proportion of boys at the school.

**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

Pupils enjoy coming to this satisfactory school and are right to make positive comments such as, 'It's a happy and healthy school' and 'Teachers are fun and kind'. Members of staff work together well as a team to plan interesting experiences through various topics. Good partnerships with parents and carers support the good care provided and the pupils' learning at home. One parent spoke for others by saying, 'I have found all the teaching staff friendly, approachable and informed. I have been given easy-to-understand strategies to help my children progress.'

Children make a sound start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, build steadily on what they have already learned as they move through the school between Years 1 and 6, leading to broadly average attainment by the end of Year 6. Pupils' progress is too uneven between classes because teachers do not always plan work that meets the range of pupils' needs within each class. Pupils do best in reading because these skills are promoted and monitored particularly closely. The school is working well to close the gap in attainment between reading and writing, with interesting writing topics being provided across the curriculum. Leaders are aware that progress in mathematics lags behind, particularly for some girls who lack confidence, are too quiet in lessons and do not contribute enough to discussions. Nevertheless, good relationships between members of staff and pupils enable pupils to feel safe and to behave responsibly. Teachers mark pupils' work frequently but do not consistently provide precise next steps for development or ensure that pupils know their targets to help them to improve their work and learn quickly. In some lessons, pupils are not challenged to complete hard enough work at a fast pace.

There are satisfactory procedures for school self-evaluation that support leaders in planning for improvement and there is a mostly accurate understanding of how well the school is doing. Several changes in staffing, which have been beyond the school's control, have had a delaying impact on the rate of development, although there is a strong determination to raise attainment. Pupils' progress is being tracked more rigorously so that support, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, can be targeted more precisely. Monitoring of teaching and learning is largely undertaken by senior leaders. Subject leaders have too little opportunity to ensure that new developments are having a consistent impact on provision and pupils' progress across the school. Recent improvements in the curriculum and in pupils' writing demonstrate satisfactory leadership and a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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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 increase progress, especially for girls in mathematics, by:
  - ensuring that girls develop confidence in mathematics and participate fully in lessons
  - planning work that closely matches pupils' differing levels of ability and ensuring that all pupils are clear about what they are expected to achieve.
  
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching by:
  - making sure that lessons have sufficient pace so that pupils are challenged to learn quickly
  - ensuring that assessment and the targets set for pupils are used more rigorously to help pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve their work.
  
- Strengthen the role of subject leaders so that they have a greater impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

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

Most children are working within the levels typical for their age when they start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although communication, language and literacy is less well developed than other areas of learning. Pupils enjoy school and especially appreciate taking part in the interesting activities and topics. They do best in literacy because these skills are promoted well across the curriculum. This includes those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities; for example, in a good religious education lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils enjoyed listening to the story of 'The Prodigal Son' and were involved well in sharing their views. Pupils do less well in mathematics than in English because work is not always adapted closely enough to the range of needs in each class or explained as clearly as it might be. For example, in some lessons pupils of all abilities take part in the same task at the start of the lesson and not all stay fully involved, particularly the quieter girls when boys dominate discussions.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although progress varies between lessons. For example, in a good lesson in Year 2, pupils demonstrated the good knowledge they had learnt that day, when they discussed with their teachers 'The Great Fire of London' with a role play about Samuel Pepys. In contrast, in a satisfactory lesson, pupils of all abilities completed a worksheet that provided only limited challenge and interest. Inconsistent provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the past has led to variable, although generally satisfactory, progress.

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Recent improvements in the nature of the interventions adults are making are starting to focus more accurately on pupils’ specific needs.

Pupils’ satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills, along with their good personal development, prepare them appropriately for the next stage of education and later lives. Rates of attendance are above average, reflecting pupils’ enthusiasm for school.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school and they are knowledgeable about e-safety. Pupils support each other in their learning and are good at helping others. For example, they helped to set up a sensory garden in the local area and older pupils act as buddies for the younger ones. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Clear guidance in times of worship and in lessons supports this development well. For example, pupils reflected sensibly on the part that the Second World War played in bringing about world peace. They have a good sense of local culture and are developing a greater awareness of cultural diversity by tracking the global travel of ‘Wicky’. The school deserves its National Healthy School Award because pupils are keen to take part in the various sporting activities available and there is a good take-up of the healthy school lunches.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers have good relationships with pupils and consequently they manage behaviour successfully. They have secure subject knowledge, prepare lessons

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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diligently and use a range of resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), to support learning. In a good start to a mathematics lesson in Year 3, a teacher used the interactive whiteboard to reveal parts of mystery shapes, enabling pupils to test their knowledge and use their powers of reasoning. In some lessons, teachers do not ensure that all pupils are challenged consistently well. This is because they do not make sufficiently rigorous use of assessment information when planning tasks for different groups of pupils. For example, in a mathematics lesson all pupils completed a times-table task and some had to wait for others to catch up, losing valuable learning time.

Pupils and parents are very enthusiastic about the ‘stunning starts’ and ‘fabulous finishes’ in the recently revised curriculum and there are good links between subjects. Literacy is used well to support learning in topic work and has increased the motivation of pupils in writing. There are some missed opportunities for pupils to use ICT in support of their learning and curriculum arrangements are not yet supporting progress consistently well.

Pupils, including those who are vulnerable, are cared for well and close links with parents and carers are established. The breakfast club run by the school supports families well and provides healthy snacks and safe activities. Transition arrangements are secure and help pupils to move smoothly from one stage of education to the next.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leadership and management are satisfactory because leaders are embedding ambition and driving improvement. There is a shared understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school so that it can become good in the future. They promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination. Pupils from different backgrounds are supported and encouraged equally well; they are included well socially and the school is working appropriately with external agencies to eliminate unevenness in learning and progress between lessons and subjects. The changes in staffing have been managed smoothly.

The school’s safeguarding arrangements keep pupils safe, although not all members of staff are fully aware of the most recent changes in responsibilities. Members of staff are suitably trained and safer recruitment procedures are followed carefully.

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The governing body meets statutory requirements and is knowledgeable about the school. It asks some challenging questions and is developing its role in improving provision and pupils’ progress. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to be involved in the local community and is expanding opportunities for them to learn in greater depth about cultural diversity in the United Kingdom.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception classes and enter Year 1 with broadly average attainment. Members of staff work together closely to provide a variety of activities indoors and outside. Children enjoy working with each other and with members of staff, as was observed when a group of children operated the remotely controlled spider. While there are some exciting activities, such as the spider hunt, other tasks are less stimulating and insufficiently focused to ensure children learn quickly. For example, children were playing in the sand with no clear purpose to extend their learning.

Children settle into school swiftly because members of staff work closely with parents and carers and establish good relationships with the children. There are some good role-play opportunities, such as the theatre, that provide meaningful opportunities for speaking and listening. Social skills are developed well and clear routines help children to be safe and happy. Children are keen to talk about what they are doing, enjoy learning and behave sensibly. There are satisfactory arrangements for assessing learning, although information is not always used fully to support the children’s differing needs. Leaders have sound plans for improvement, including ensuring that there are more activities to help promote literacy.



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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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

An average proportion of parents replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Most parents and carers are positive about the school and are particularly pleased with the way their children enjoy school and are kept safe and healthy. The inspection team also found that these aspects of the school were good. A few parents and carers expressed concerns over the progress their children make and how their child’s particular needs were being met. The inspection team found that pupils make satisfactory progress, although not all pupils do as well as they might.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Staplehurst 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 164 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 450 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	82	50	80	49	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	89	54	71	43	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	61	37	90	55	10	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	26	91	55	21	13	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	65	40	88	54	8	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	59	36	93	57	7	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	38	98	60	2	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	55	34	77	47	14	9	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	54	33	88	54	16	10	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	27	100	61	8	5	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	24	94	57	14	9	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	66	40	83	51	5	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	72	44	81	49	7	4	1	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



9 November 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Staplehurst School, Tonbridge TN12 0LZ**

We enjoyed coming to see your friendly school. Thank you for being so helpful during our visit. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

These are the best things about your school.

- You make best progress in reading.
- You behave well and enjoy coming to school. We agree that the 'stunning starts' are good fun.
- You are good at helping around the school and in the local area.
- We agree with you when you say that teachers look after you well.
- The headteacher and other leaders know what needs to be done to make the school better.

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

- Help you to do even better, especially girls in mathematics, by making sure you are confident, take a full part in lessons and are always given work that is just right for you.
- Make sure that more lessons help you to learn really quickly and that marking and targets help you to know precisely what you need to do to improve in your work.
- Help teachers who look after subjects to have more impact on helping you to learn fast in all lessons.

Thank you once again for telling us about your school and letting us see your work. You can help your teachers by always doing your best work.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge  
Lead inspector

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