

Stower Provost Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113674
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	378741
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Barron

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	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Gosney
Headteacher	Julie Sanderson
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2009
School address	Woodville Stour Provost Gillingham Dorset SP8 5LX
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons and observed four teachers. Also, they held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, teaching and support staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at school development planning, the governing body minutes, school policies, including those associated with safeguarding procedures, assessment and tracking documentation, pupil records and samples of pupils' work. They also scrutinised questionnaires returned by staff and pupils, as well as 52 from parents and carers.

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

- Pupils' present attainment, particularly in Year 6, and what this signifies in terms of the achievement and progress of different groups of pupils, especially in mathematics.
- Provision for cultural education and its impact on building up pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultures and communities other than their own, especially regarding the wider nature of modern society in the United Kingdom.
- The quality of teaching and learning, especially in catering for pupils' different abilities and needs in the school's three mixed-age group classes.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school set in rural surroundings. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most of that group of pupils have specific learning difficulties. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the school's Reception-Year class. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school has gained several awards, including Healthy Schools status and the Rights Respecting School award. There is on-site pre-school provision not managed by the governing body and subject to a separate inspection. The acting headteacher at the time of the previous inspection is now the substantive headteacher of 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school, which has improved its effectiveness since the previous inspection by raising expectations of how well pupils can achieve. Pupils are well behaved and keen to learn. The school strikes a good balance between focusing on pupils' personal development and well-being and concentrating on academic achievement. It has an inclusive ethos and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support ensures that pupils feel valued as individuals and develop into confident and effective learners. Health and well-being are safeguarded securely and child-protection procedures are good. One pupil commented, 'I like school because I always feel safe and teachers make lessons interesting. Everyone is so friendly.' Several other pupils said that they felt respected as individuals and part of a big, happy family. Parents and carers value the effective way the school safeguards pupils. The parent who commented, 'the staff really do care about our children,' summed up the very positive views of the overwhelming majority of parents and carers. However, even though pupils display a good and growing understanding of the immediate world in which they live, they have only a limited understanding of the different beliefs and cultures to be found in modern society in the United Kingdom.

The school is led well by a dedicated and very effective headteacher, who has a clear vision for school improvement. She has worked well with the staff and governing body since her appointment to ensure that the school has evaluated its performance regularly and accurately. Staff are enthusiastic and work well as a team to ensure the school reaches the challenging targets it sets itself. That has been a key factor in improving the school's effectiveness since the previous inspection, for example, in raising pupils' attainment throughout the school, especially in mathematics. It is also an indication of the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and caters well for pupils' needs. That is reflected in their good achievement. The school has developed effective systems to track the progress of individual pupils and teachers use these well when planning lessons, in order to ensure that work is matched well to pupils' individual needs. Very well-targeted support enables all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also the more-able, to make good progress in all year groups. Attainment in Year 6 is above average in both English and mathematics and this represents good progress for this group of pupils.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. However, although the

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Reception-Year classroom is colourful and well resourced, the outdoor area is quite small and uninspiring and does not match the good quality of the indoor provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by the end of summer term 2012, so that it matches the good quality of indoor provision, in order to ensure that children are provided with the facilities they need to develop the skills associated with outdoor learning.
- Increase pupils' awareness of modern society in the United Kingdom by improving opportunities for them to develop their knowledge and understanding of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the country in which they live.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the local community and have a growing awareness of their rights and responsibilities. They say that they enjoy school and this is reflected in their high rates of attendance. They respond well to the friendly and caring approach taken by the school and comment that they feel very safe and secure. They know that adults are always on hand to deal with any concerns they may have. Pupils have a good awareness of the need to stay healthy and older pupils understand the significance of the school gaining Healthy Schools status. They are able to explain why it is important to exercise regularly and only eat healthy foods. The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with the moral and social aspects especially strong. That is reflected in pupils' good behaviour and in their respect for others. Pupils say that they are confident any very rare instances of anti-social actions by others will be dealt with quickly and fairly by adults.

Children often enter the school's Early Years Foundation Stage with skills levels and understanding typically expected for their age. They make good progress in the Reception Year and continue to make similar progress through the rest of the school. Pupils look forward to lessons and say that they like their teachers because they are always friendly. They are confident that they will always be given help if they are having difficulties with their learning. Their good overall progress in building up skills in mathematics, literacy, and information and communication technology (ICT), coupled with their good attitudes towards learning, is preparing them well for their future economic well-being.

Pupils are enthusiastic and work hard. That was evident during an outstanding literacy lesson to a mixed Year 1 and Year 2 class. Pupils enjoyed learning because the lesson was planned exceptionally well to ensure that the work pupils completed was matched very well to their different abilities and previous learning. The teacher and effective teaching assistants ensured the pupils requiring extra help supported were very well. In addition, the more-able pupils were provided with tasks which made them think about their work. As a result, all groups of pupils made outstanding

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progress in developing their ability to write interesting stories. Similarly, pupils in the Year 3 and Year 4 class made good progress developing their ability to add two- and three-digit numbers together successfully because they found the work they had to complete interesting and the tasks were matched to their different abilities well.

However, even though teachers mark pupils work in books consistently, it was evident from pupils’ questionnaire replies that the quality of this marking varies sometimes. The majority of marking provides pupils with good ideas about how to improve their work, but there are rare occasions when pupils say they are unsure of how well they are doing.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The creative curriculum mixes different subjects together well, in order to make learning interesting. It provides pupils with a range of experiences which help broaden their understanding of the immediate world in which they live. It has been designed to make learning meaningful, while focusing on promoting the effective development of skills in numeracy, literacy and ICT. It is popular with pupils who say that they like that approach to learning. The good quality of work on display around the school provides clear evidence that the curriculum is not just restricted to mathematics and English. Teachers and effective teaching assistants work well to make a positive contribution to pupils’ progress. Classrooms are well resourced and teachers make good use of modern technology, such as interactive whiteboards, to enhance lessons. However, on rare occasions, lesson introductions are too long and

¹ 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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pupils begin to lose a little interest in learning.

Parents and carers value the way the school looks after their children. The comment from one parent that ‘pupils are so safe and so well cared for’ echoed the views of the vast majority of parents and carers. Also, it summed up neatly the outstanding level of care, guidance and support the school provides for pupils. Effective induction and transfer arrangements help pupils settle into new routines. Any pupils the school feels could be potentially vulnerable receive an excellent level of well-targeted care and support. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. Pupils enjoy visiting interesting places and Year 5 and Year 6 pupils talk excitedly about their forthcoming residential trip to Wales. Pupils say that they like learning French and also meeting interesting visitors to the school. They appreciate the diverse programme of popular enrichment activities the school provides for them. The programme includes after-school clubs, featuring artistic, sporting and musical activities, including learning to play the ukulele. However, the curriculum does not offer frequent opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of the wider nature of modern society in the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The good quality of leadership and management is reflected in the thoroughness of the school’s self-evaluation and the quality of its development planning, which focuses well on important priorities. Staff morale is good and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The school has worked hard to make sure that pupils are given equal opportunities to succeed and any very rare instances of discrimination are tackled quickly and effectively. The governing body is well informed and supportive and offers the school an effective level of challenge when required. It plays a full and active role in school life and fulfils its statutory duties well.

The school’s relationship with parents and carers is good. Parents and carers appreciate the way the school keeps them well informed about school activities and tries to involve them in their children’s learning. The school’s work in promoting community cohesion is satisfactory and it uses its good links with the local community well to develop pupils’ understanding of the immediate world around them. The school is well resourced and links with outside agencies are used effectively to support pupils’ learning and well-being. Safeguarding procedures are

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good and meet all requirements. That is reflected in the precise nature of vetting checks and also in the effective way the school monitors and evaluates its practices. Staff and the governing body are well aware of the importance of their role in protecting pupils and receive regular training about safeguarding issues.

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	2
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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

A comment by one parent summed up the good quality of provision in the school’s Early Years Foundation Stage; ‘My daughter has settled in the Reception-Year class very well and I like the fact that they teach children at their own individual pace.’

The effective level of commitment and care shown by the Reception-Year staff is evident in the way children settle quickly into the school so well. Children appear happy and contented and quickly develop good attitudes to learning. That is reflected both in their good progress and also their good behaviour. The class teacher works well with her effective teaching assistant to ensure that lessons stimulate children’s interest and cater well for individual needs. Often, lessons provide children with opportunities to work independently, including at both child-initiated and adult-led activities. Children appear eager to learn and interact well with classmates and adults. That was evident during a lesson in which children worked well in small groups at a number of activities which focused on developing their communication skills, as well as their imaginations. The children were happy to talk about what they were doing and appeared quite confident when seeking the support of adults, if they needed help with their work.

Staff know the children very well and they ensure that the least-able make good progress, especially in improving their social and language skills. Good leadership

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and management ensure priority is given to children’s personal, social and emotional development. The Reception-Year classroom is bright and colourful and provides children with a stimulating learning environment. By comparison, the secure outdoor area is rather small. It is well resourced, but does not provide children with a suitable covered area to use to build up the skills associated with outdoor learning during inclement weather.

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

There was an above-average rate of response to the parents’ and carers’ questionnaire returns. An overwhelming majority of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaires or who were spoken to by inspectors held positive views about the school. Few parents and carers expressed any concerns, although a very small minority felt that the school did not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour and a few felt that the school was not meeting their children’s particular needs. Inspectors considered their comments carefully during the inspection and judged that the school dealt with any rare instances of unacceptable behaviour well and met the needs of individual children effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stower Provost Community 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 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 76 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	71	15	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	75	13	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	29	56	22	42	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	52	20	38	3	6	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	30	58	20	38	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	35	67	12	23	2	4	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	56	20	38	1	2	2	4
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)	31	60	15	29	2	4	1	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	28	54	20	38	4	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	60	14	27	5	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	50	22	42	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	58	17	33	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	31	60	18	35	3	6	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	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).

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.



21 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stower Provost Community School, Gillingham SP8 5LX

Thank you for welcoming me and the other inspector to your school. We enjoyed talking to you about what you like about school and watching you work hard in lessons. You were all friendly and polite and we now understand why you like your school so much. We enjoyed watching the Reception-Year assembly also and we were very impressed by the mature way Year 6 pupils talked to us about their views of the school. Stower Provost Community is a good school.

Here are some of the things we found out about your school.

- You get off to a good start in the Reception class.
- You make good progress throughout the rest of the school.
- Your teachers always try to make lessons interesting.
- Adults make sure you are safe and looked after and cared for very well.
- Your behaviour is good and you all get on very well with each other.
- Your headteacher, governing body and staff are working hard to improve the school.

We believe your headteacher and teachers can make your school even better. We have asked them to:

- make the outdoor area for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage as exciting to explore and learn in as the lovely classroom
- help all of you to find out more about the customs and traditions of people living in this country who are from different cultural backgrounds to yours.

Thank you for making us feel really welcome. We hope you continue to enjoy school. All of you can help to make your school even better by making sure you always work hard in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Michael Barron
Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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