

Stukeley Meadows Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110772
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	378165
Inspection dates	23–24 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Paul Weston HMI

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	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Bingley
Headteacher	Phillip Leverett
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2010
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons taught by 13 different teachers. They held meetings with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at data on pupils' progress, pupils' work, school improvement plans, monitoring records and governing body minutes. They also viewed safeguarding records and related policies and undertook a case study of some pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable. They analysed 85 pupils' questionnaires, 28 staff questionnaires and 135 questionnaires 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.

- To what extent is the school able to demonstrate that the sharp decline in attainment seen over the past two years has been halted and that pupils now make at least satisfactory progress?
- How effective has the school been in responding to its previous inspection report by ensuring that teaching provides pace and challenge in developing pupils' learning?
- How effective and accurate are assessment and tracking systems, and how well these have been used to intervene with those groups identified as making less than expected progress, especially in mathematics and for lower- and higher-attaining pupils?
- Is there sufficient evidence to show that school leaders are setting challenging targets, driving improvement and effectively raising pupils' attainment?

Information about the school

Stukeley Meadows is a larger than average- sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are White British. The percentages of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and in the early stages of learning English are similar to that found nationally. An increasing number of pupils from Eastern Europe and the Philippines join or leave the school at times other than the usual starting or leaving points. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the average. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities than found nationally. The school has achieved the Activemark, ICTMark and Healthy Schools awards in recent years.

At the last inspection the school was given a notice to improve. Significant improvement was required to raise attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 2, improve the proportion of consistently good teaching and improve the rigour of monitoring and evaluation. Since that date there has been support from the local authority. The school was visited in May 2011 by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors who was of the opinion that the school was making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Stukeley Meadows is a satisfactory school. The good features identified in the previous report have been sustained and most parents are happy with the school. Children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Over the last year, school leaders and staff have worked hard to remedy many of the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Achievement is now satisfactory. Raising attainment in mathematics and increasing the proportion of consistently good teaching were previously the areas where the most significant improvement was required. The results of last year's assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were disappointingly low and they show that there remains a legacy of underachievement. However, improvements in the quality of teaching and a relentless focus on improving learning, especially in mathematics, have resulted in at least satisfactory progress across the school for all groups. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many pupils are now making good progress, particularly those in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. The school's assessment systems are used well to track individuals and groups, and in the main, assessment information is used effectively to plan teaching and learning. Despite these improvements, standards are still not high enough. Structures and strategies are in place but are not sufficiently well embedded to guarantee the sustained accelerated progress necessary, particularly in writing and for more-able pupils, to make up for past weaknesses.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In the majority of lessons, teaching is good but some variability remains. The pace of learning and the level of challenge to pupils are still uneven. This means that they do not always have the opportunity to build effectively on their previous achievements. Whole-school systems have been introduced, particularly related to assessment and marking, and these have resulted in some good practice in a number of classes but, again, some inconsistencies are in evidence. Teachers' expectations of punctuation, spelling and presentation are also variable throughout the school. The curriculum for literacy and numeracy is well planned, but insufficient opportunities are provided to develop basic skills through topics or other subjects.

The leadership team has a clear sense of purpose and ambition and it is working well

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to increase the rate of improvement. Good external support has been used well and the staff have demonstrated that they are willing, capable and have an appetite for improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and leaders have correctly identified those areas requiring improvement. They have implemented a number of systems and structures to overcome identified weaknesses but many of these are in the early stages of implementation. New ways of working have been introduced by the governing body and they are increasingly holding the school's leaders to account for standards and quality. The achievements since the last inspection indicate that the school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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 levels of attainment further and continue to accelerate progress throughout the school, particularly in writing, by:
 - improving the quality of teaching so that 80% is consistently good and 20% is outstanding by December 2012
 - ensuring that the pace of all lessons is suitably brisk
 - ensuring that work is better matched to all pupils' abilities and the level of challenge increased, particularly for the more able
 - ensuring consistently high expectations of spelling, punctuation and presentation in written work.
- Ensure that the curriculum for subjects other than English and mathematics:
 - provides more opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills
 - is consistently marked and identifies clearly the next steps in pupils' learning.
- Strengthen leadership and management further by embedding recently introduced systems and strategies, ensuring consistency of approach.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and experiences that are below those expected for their age. Standards at the end of Year 6 in 2011 were low in reading, writing and mathematics. However, school data, confirmed by inspection evidence, indicate that learning and progress although satisfactory, are improving rapidly. Pupils now have a much greater understanding of what it is they are learning, so they are working harder and paying greater attention to the advice given by teachers on how they can improve their work.

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The introduction of a daily mathematics lessons, the increased amount of teaching time for the subject and the focus on mental arithmetic are increasing pupils’ skills and confidence in mathematics. However, weaknesses persist where gaps in pupils’ mathematical knowledge inhibit their progress. For example, in a lower junior mathematics lesson, pupils lacked confidence and understanding to select the most efficient method of multiplication to solve a problem. Better subject knowledge and improved planning by teachers are leading to good improvements in writing in literacy lessons. However, there is still some way to go. Weaknesses in punctuation, spelling and presentation persist. In addition, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to write at length in other subjects. Improved teaching and effectively tailored small-group and one-to-one support for those pupils at risk of underachieving have had a positive impact. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities now make at least satisfactory progress. Their attainment, however, remains low in reading, writing and mathematics. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because transition arrangements are effective, assessment is swift and they receive good support from the inclusion team. Pupils are adequately prepared for secondary school.

Pupils feel safe and secure and have a good awareness of how to stay healthy. Although attendance is above average, it is adversely affected by a small number of families who take extended holidays during term time. Pupils take responsibility in many ways, for example, through the school council, in the playground and in classrooms. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is reflected well in the respectful and courteous way most pupils treat each other. However, while pupils are knowledgeable about other faiths and cultures, their engagement with different ethnic and religious groups in this country and abroad is less developed. One or two pupils exhibit challenging behaviour, although this is generally well managed by staff.

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	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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will	3

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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contribute to their future economic well-being	
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

All teaching takes place in a positive atmosphere that is respectful and industrious. Behaviour is managed well and any minor distractions are dealt with quickly and effectively. The majority of the teaching at Stukeley Meadows is interesting, enthusiastic and lively. It is planned with a secure knowledge of pupils' needs and the work is matched accordingly. This good teaching is focused at all times on clear learning objectives that are regularly revisited to ensure that pupils are making the best progress they can. There is a good balance for pupils between opportunities to talk and to listen, with pupils reflecting on their work and teachers extending learning through careful questioning. Increasing opportunities are provided for independent and investigative learning. In a minority of lessons, however, the focus of the teaching is too wide, giving insufficient challenge to some groups of pupils, particularly the more able, and the pace is too slow. There are missed opportunities to ensure that pupils are consistently engaged and learning. Expectations are not high enough regarding accuracy, the quality of presentation and spelling. Although homework is regularly provided in some classes, it is less frequent in others.

The adequate curriculum, which links together different subjects, is suitably interesting and sufficiently broad and balanced. It supports pupils' enjoyment of their learning, such as the work on the Romans and the Second World War. Pupils say that they find many of the themes 'fun'. However, in some subjects such as science, history and geography, there is insufficient recorded evidence of work. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop information and communication technology skills. An appropriate range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities support the curriculum.

Parents and carers appreciate the good level of care and support that their children receive. One parent wrote, 'We think...there is a very nurturing atmosphere at the school.' All staff know each pupil well and are fully involved in providing effective pastoral support, especially for the more vulnerable pupils. This is greatly appreciated by pupils. Learning difficulties are identified early. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have effective individual education plans. In-class support for individual pupils is well organised and monitored. The high quality work of the pupil support worker is greatly valued by pupils and their parents and carers. The school draws well on the expertise of external agencies to devise programmes for those with more complex needs and those in the early stages of learning English. It keeps in close contact with all parents about how well their children are progressing.

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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?

Since the last inspection, managers, supported by the local authority, have implemented a range of effective initiatives including the establishment of clear tracking data and regular meetings about pupils' progress. Regular and detailed monitoring has also been put in place. These initiatives have led to a palpable sense of ambition, a clear sense of shared purpose in the school, the raising of expectations and a demonstrable improvement in teaching. However, many of these strategies are recent and have not had time to fully embed. School improvement planning is securely based on an accurate analysis of attainment and progress over time and priorities identified are appropriate.

Members of the governing body are committed to, and interested in, the school. They have taken advantage of training opportunities to increase their knowledge and understanding. Governors are now providing appropriate challenge and support. For instance, they are developing effective first-hand systems to monitor school provision in order to hold school leaders to account. Procedures for safeguarding are satisfactory and meet government requirements. A very few administrative shortcomings were identified but these were remedied before the end of the inspection. The school takes good steps to ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to participate and learn, particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and in the early stages of learning English. As a result, their progress is accelerating. Any racist incidents between pupils are quickly and effectively dealt with.

The partnership with the local primary and secondary schools are good. Constructive and beneficial partnerships exist with agencies to support those pupils who may be vulnerable. The family support worker has established productive links with parents and carers. Governing body representatives have increased their profile at parents' meetings. Despite this, a small minority of parents do not feel that school leaders communicate or respond effectively to their concerns about issues such as mixed-aged classes, homework inconsistencies and behavioural issues. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has a good understanding of, and contributes well to the local community. It has accurately identified the steps it needs to take to promote community cohesion further, such as promoting pupils' first-hand engagement with a range of community groups both nationally and internationally.

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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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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 are now making outstanding progress in all six areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they enter Key Stage 1 as capable, independent learners. The large majority attain the early learning goals expected for children at the end of the Reception Year and an increasing proportion exceeds them. Children enjoy all they do. They quickly become confident, play in harmony and learn how to be independent. They feel safe and are confident that adults will listen carefully to them.

Excellent teaching develops children’s language skills, including their knowledge of sounds and letters. Children are good listeners and acquire a firm interest in reading. There is a good mix of child-initiated and adult-led tasks, and every opportunity is taken to build activities upon children’s interest. Effective assessment matches learning to children’s needs. Good leadership ensures adults work as a team and are committed to children’s well-being. Although performance data is gathered routinely, it is not interrogated sharply enough by leaders to identify and prioritise further areas for development. The extremely well-resourced outside space is well utilised to provide highly effective learning across all six areas.

Exemplary provision gives children firm foundations for their future learning. A varied and rich curriculum is offered to children. Induction to school is well organised to ensure a smooth transition. Links with parents are excellent and they value the provision. One parent commented, ‘The Reception team were brilliant at settling my child into school life quickly and as a result she really enjoys school.’

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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	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

An average percentage of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Most feel that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles. Most also feel that they are kept well informed about the progress their children are making and the school helps them support their child’s learning.

A few responses indicated that their child did not make sufficient progress and the school did not always prepare their children effectively for the future. Inspectors found that pupils made satisfactory progress and they were satisfactorily prepared for their next stage of learning. However, this was uneven through the school. A small minority feel that the school did not always deal effectively with incidents of unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors did not observe anything to support this view during their time at the school during lessons and break times. There are two or three challenging pupils in the school who were dealt with well during the inspection. Pupils said that they felt that, although there was some falling out, these incidents were dealt with promptly by adults and to their satisfaction.

A few parents and carers feel that the school does not sufficiently take account of their concerns and a small minority feel that the school is not effectively led and managed. In the main, this is because they have concerns about mixed-aged classes in Key Stage 2 and the frequency and amount of homework set for their children. The inspection team judged leadership and management to be satisfactory. Pupils in the mixed-aged classes made the same rates of progress as those in single age classes. However, inspectors did find that there was some variability in the amount, and frequency, of homework set for pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stukeley Meadows 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 135 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 380 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	51	61	45	5	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	58	43	64	47	10	7	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	38	28	81	60	9	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	33	62	46	19	14	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	33	69	51	9	7	3	2
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	48	36	72	53	11	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	33	83	61	3	2	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)	46	34	61	45	18	13	4	3
The school meets my child’s particular needs	41	30	72	53	11	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	24	59	44	26	19	10	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	27	52	39	24	18	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	39	29	60	44	21	16	9	7
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	50	37	60	44	18	13	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.



25 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stukeley Meadows Primary School, Huntingdon, PE29 6UH

I visited your school recently with two other inspectors to find out how well you were doing. Thank you for being so friendly, polite and welcoming, especially those of you who gave up your time to talk to us.

When your school was last inspected, the inspectors decided that things were not right and it was given what we call 'a notice to improve'. Everyone, including you and your parents, told us that your school has improved. After having a very close look at all sorts of things, including coming into lots of lessons, we agree. Well done! Your school is now satisfactory.

You are developing into sensible, helpful young people. The adults in school take care of you and make sure you are safe. Your teachers are planning better and more interesting lessons. They are trying hard to make sure the learning is at the right level for you. They involve you in this so you know how well you are doing and what you need to do next.

We think, and your school agrees, that although things have improved especially in mathematics there is still a lot more to do to make it even better. For example, the standards you reach in English and mathematics are still not good enough. We have asked your teachers to expect even more of you both in terms of how much you do and how good your work is, especially in writing. We also want you to use your mathematics and writing skills more in other areas of the curriculum, such as science and geography. We think you can rise to this challenge! The teachers have introduced a lot of new ideas recently, but they need a bit more time to make sure that everyone works in a similar way. We have also asked the school leaders to make sure that keep a close eye on everything to make sure everyone is on the right track.

We could see that everyone in your school, including you, wants the school to carry on improving so, well done so far and good luck for the next part of the Stukeley Meadows story.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston
Her Majesty's Inspector

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