

Stapleford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	117455
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	395463
Inspection dates	3–4 May 2012
Lead inspector	George Logan

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Critchley
Headteacher	Rebecca Collins
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2006
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	3–4 May 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

George Logan

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent three hours and 30 minutes visiting eight lessons taught by four different members of staff. He held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, with staff and two groups of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, listened to pupils reading and looked at the school's documentation, which included records of teaching, the main improvement plan, records relating to safeguarding and extracts from the school's tracking of pupils' progress. A scrutiny of pupils' written work was also undertaken. The inspector analysed 68 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, together with 13 questionnaires from staff and 42 from pupils.

Information about the school

Stapleford Primary School is a smaller-than-average sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language, with none at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those at school action plus and with statements, is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The school meets the current government floor standards which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has gained a number of awards in recent years, including the Silver School Travel Award and the National Healthy School award. Pupils are taught in four classes. Nursery children attend only in the mornings. The school offers before- and after-school care clubs, managed by the governing body. This provision is included in the inspection. The school also hosts a mornings-only pre-school, Stapleford Early Years. This is inspected separately and is not part of this 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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Attainment overall remains broadly average however, pupils are now making faster progress. The school provides satisfactorily for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The school is not yet good because some inconsistencies in achievement and teaching have yet to be resolved. Schools whose effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and attainment at the end of Year 2 is broadly average. Progress in Years 3 to 6 has been variable, although some pupils make good progress. Relatively small cohorts sometimes affect attainment by the end of Year 6. There is evidence, currently, of accelerating progress and above-average standards for an increasing proportion of pupils.
- Teaching is satisfactory, with some good teaching observed. Relationships are a strength. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Many aspects of assessment are well-established and have a positive impact on pupils' progress. The marking of writing gives pupils clear guidance for improving their work. This good practice is not so evident in other subjects.
- Behaviour, safety and pupils' personal development are good. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. Provision for pupils' welfare is good and pupils feel safe. Incidents of poor behaviour are infrequent. Attendance is above average.
- Some aspects of the management of performance are good, such as effective arrangements for monitoring and improving teaching. Although there is an established system for checking pupils' progress, school leaders do not always respond promptly when performance dips. School development planning identifies some, but not all, of the key priorities for the school. Governance is

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satisfactory. The restructured curriculum provides good learning experiences.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise standards by the end of Year 2 and embed the improving pattern of progress and outcomes in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - ensuring that teaching constantly challenges pupils so that they learn at a brisk pace
 - strengthen the marking of pupils' work so that it is always clear to them how to improve in all subjects.
- Extend the existing good practice in the marking of pupils' writing to the other subjects of the curriculum so that it is always clear what pupils need to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by:
 - ensuring that school leaders and governors respond promptly and resolutely to dips in pupil performance
 - ensuring that school development planning is clearly focused on the key priorities identified through the rigorous analysis of pupil progress and outcomes.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although some pupils achievement is good. Parents and carers generally feel that their children are doing well. Although there is an improving picture, that is evident in some pupils' work in Years 3 to 6, typically pupils make satisfactory progress and their attainment is broadly average. Although the school's own data for the current Year 6 shows that pupils are on track to attain above-average standards this year, the information indicates that they are making much more rapid progress in reading than in either writing or mathematics.

Children's skills on entry to Nursery are in line with age-related expectations. They make good progress and at the end of Reception reach a good level of development. Accurate assessment enables staff to focus on crucial personal, social, communication and literacy skills so that children become more independent. While progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, there is some loss of momentum in learning at this stage. However, there is a current focus on embedding reading skills through regular reinforcement of pupils' phonic knowledge (the linking of sounds and letters). As yet, however, reading skills remain average by the end of Year 2.

Progress in Years 3 to 6 is inconsistent, but good for some pupils. Better teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6, makes a significant contribution to improving progress. While attainment in literacy, including reading, and mathematics by the end of Year

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6 has been broadly average for several years, some pupils do better than this. Progress in reading has accelerated in the last year. Expectations are highest and progress most rapid in Years 5 and 6. Here, teaching really engages pupils, as in an effective mathematics lesson, where the teacher's close knowledge of individual pupils enabled her to target questions and apply just the right level of expectation to progress their understanding and skills. In another successful mathematics lesson, in Years 3 and 4, a high level of adult support and a brisk pace enabled pupils to increase their understanding of area and perimeter. Overall, close tracking and a stronger focus on learning are having a positive impact. Effective provision to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs ensures that they make at least satisfactory progress.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Parents and carers, and pupils, feel that teaching is good and, indeed, a significant number of good lessons were observed. However, analysis of the school's data and recent external reviews indicate that the impact of teaching over time has been more variable, leading to inconsistent progress and outcomes. Recent staff changes and the redeployment of existing staff are helping to increase the impact of teaching so that many pupils, particularly those towards the top of the school, and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, are now making accelerated progress. This is evident, for example, in the good quality of some work seen in Years 3 to 6. Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They encourage cooperative working and a readiness to share, with good opportunities for independent learning. The teaching of phonics is supported by a satisfactory range of activities accurately matched to individual needs. Where teaching is particularly good, for example, in a Years 5 and 6 literacy lesson where pupils were learning to critically evaluate and edit their short stories, the teacher engaged pupils' enthusiasm well, subtly judging the level of challenge needed to move learning on. In a few lessons, the pace is a little slow and this constrains learning. Teaching assistants are well prepared and have a positive impact upon pupils' learning.

Across the school, the embedding of assessment strategies, including self-assessment by pupils and the use of individual targets, has been a focus. There is now an extensive system of individual pupil targets and pupils understand what these are. The marking of pupils' writing tasks is thorough, identifying appropriate next steps. However, this good practice seen has not been fully extended to other subjects. Overall, the planned curriculum is supporting better progress in pupils' core skills. Well-organised outdoor activities make a significant contribution to the good learning of Early Years Foundation Stage children.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. Parents, carers and pupils also feel that this is the case. Close relationships between adults and pupils and good extra-curricular opportunities engage pupils well and underpin the positive community spirit. Pupils

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enjoy school and are well-motivated, engaged learners. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils, and most parents and carers, have few concerns about behaviour. Where issues might exist, they are managed effectively. There are few recorded incidents and only isolated pockets of occasionally inappropriate behaviour, with school records confirming that pupils' behaviour over time is mostly good. Well-managed initiatives, such as 'Helping Hands', contribute to defusing potential incidents in the playground. There are few exclusions.

Almost all pupils say that they feel safe and most parents and carers feel that their children are safe in school. However, while there are no current reports of bullying of any type, some concerns were reported in the recent past. On the evidence available, all appropriate procedures to manage these issues appear to have been followed. In addition, the school's complaints procedure has subsequently been updated. Pupils are well aware that bullying may take different forms. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage behave well and conduct themselves safely. Pupils have a good understanding of risk, supported by the school's input on road safety and personal safety. Pupils understand the need to stay safe when using the internet. Attendance is above average. Pupils arrive at school punctually.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Support for the personal development of pupils and for their well-being has, over time, been a strength. However, while good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been sustained, school leaders have not been so proactive in tackling inconsistencies in progress elsewhere. Recent staff appointments have set the agenda for higher expectations and more rapid progress is now evident in Years 3 to 6. The sole issue from the last inspection has been successfully tackled.

Many responsibilities fall to the headteacher in this small school, but she is ably supported by the staff who work cooperatively and readily take on additional responsibilities. There is a shared understanding of the school's strengths, but not always a sufficiently critical evaluation by individuals of the progress and performance data available. Generally effective monitoring of teaching and learning ensures that the proportion of good or better teaching is increasing. An effective programme of staff development ensures that all staff are well prepared to meet the wide range of pupils' needs. All staff benefit from good training opportunities. As a result, teaching assistants in particular are effective practitioners. Significant improvements have been made to the curriculum and these motivate and engage pupils well. Overall, the school's capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

Parents and carers feel that school leaders and staff effectively promote pupils' personal development and well-being, and this view is in agreement with inspection findings. School leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet all current requirements. The school actively tackles discrimination and adequately promotes equality. Arrangements for the support of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are monitored effectively. The breakfast and after-school

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clubs are well-managed to support family care needs.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development well. There is some support for cultural development through links with a school in Kenya and pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is satisfactory. Improved curriculum enrichment offers activities which enhance pupils' basic skills and engage their interest.

School self-evaluation indicates that school leaders have a mostly accurate view of what still needs to be done, although there is at times an overly-positive view of the progress pupils are making. Development planning does not always include the most salient priorities for the school. The governing body uses its specialist skills to support the school's work. However, it is over-reliant on the school's interpretation of academic performance and does not sufficiently challenge the school to address areas of underperformance promptly.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.

8 May 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Stapleford Primary School, Hertford, SG14 3NB

Thank you for making me welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed meeting you, spending time in lessons and hearing your views. Thank you to those who completed our questionnaire. I found that while Stapleford is a satisfactory school, it has some good features.

- Overall, you make satisfactory progress. However, many of you are learning more rapidly and making up lost ground. Attainment is broadly average at present, although some of you reach higher standards.
- The school provides satisfactorily for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- Progress in Nursery and Reception is good and most children have well-developed skills in reading, writing and mathematics when they enter Year 1.
- Teaching is satisfactory. However, you learn well in many lessons. The quality of your work in Year 3 to 6 is often good. Marking of writing gives you clear guidance on how to improve.
- You have positive views about school, have good attitudes to learning and behave well. Attendance is above average.
- Senior leaders have a real focus on your personal development and the quality of your experience at school.

To help you to do better, I have asked the school to:

- ensure that progress is faster in Years 1 and 2 so that standards rise by the end of Year 2, and keep a close eye on the progress you make in Years 3 to 6
- make sure that the marking of all your work shows you how you can improve
- ensure school leaders respond promptly if learning slows down and include all the important areas for improvement in the development plan.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and doing your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan
Lead inspector

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