

Stonebow Primary School Loughborough

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120104
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	379953
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2012
Lead inspector	Geof Timms

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	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mahwish Khan
Headteacher	Olivia Wood
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Geof Timms

Additional Inspector

Godfrey Bancroft

Additional Inspector

Yvonne Watts

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with one day's notice. The inspectors observed 20 lessons, taught by 14 teachers, for a total of almost nine hours, as well as spending other time looking at pupils' work. In addition, meetings were held with staff and members of the governing body, as well as pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of assessment data, policies, reports and planning documents. They analysed the responses to 86 parental questionnaires.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. A below-average proportion of the pupils are currently known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are White British, and an average proportion have minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average overall but high in some year groups. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. A privately-run before- and after-school club shares the school site; these are inspected and reported on separately.

The school has Healthy Schools status, ECO school, International School and Let's Get Cooking awards.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is rapidly improving and has a number of outstanding features. It is not yet outstanding overall because the progress pupils make in Key Stage 2 is not yet consistently strong enough to help them achieve as well as they can in the key subjects of English and mathematics.
- Children’s progress in the Reception classes is good. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make excellent progress and achieve very well. Older pupils’ progress has been inconsistent in writing although good in reading and mathematics. They make accelerated progress in Year 6 and this ensures that by the time they leave the school current standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching and learning are good. Increasingly effective teaching is having a positive impact on the progress made by most pupils. Teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to spread the existing good and outstanding practice, although the school is addressing this. Teaching of writing has been weaker in the past but the school has made some successful improvements, although the impact is yet to be seen in consistent progress in some classes in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils’ behaviour is good. This has a good impact on their learning and on how safe they feel at school. Their behaviour is equally good in lessons and around the school. Pupils talk positively about how poor behaviour almost never disrupts their learning. Pupils’ attendance is not as high as it could be. A small number of parents take their children out of school during term time, some persistently, despite the school’s efforts to discourage them. Even though the numbers involved are small, data show that this hinders their learning.
- The leadership of teaching and management of performance are good. The school has maintained the strengths of its outstanding curriculum since the last inspection and this has a positive impact in ensuring pupils’ excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The senior leadership team is very

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enthusiastic and knowledgeable.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of pupils' progress in writing in Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring more of the teaching is consistently good or outstanding by sharing the best practice among all staff
 - fully embedding the recent improvements made to the teaching of writing.
- Improve attendance to meet or exceed the national average and reduce the amount of persistent absenteeism.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Overall progress across the school is good. Standards are often above average, especially in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6 and this is from starting points that are often below those expected when children start in the Reception classes. However, achievement is not outstanding because progress in writing is not as strong as it is in reading and mathematics, especially in some classes in Key Stage 2. Current Year 6 pupils have made good progress and the evidence in lessons and in pupils' books shows they are on track to achieve their targets, which are much more challenging than the levels achieved last year. Almost all parents and carers are happy with the progress their children make in learning the basic skills. The inspection findings support this positive view.

The scrutiny of pupils' work and the evidence from observing teaching shows that progress is good in reading and mathematics, and improving in writing, where standards are rising. Pupils enjoy reading and do so with accuracy and a growing understanding of how to sound new words. For example, in Year 3 pupils talk confidently about their books and explain what strategies they use to read new words. The school has had a focus on improving pupils' writing and this is beginning to have a positive impact. Standards in reading are high at the end of Key Stage 1 and remain above average when they leave school.

Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. From starting points that are often below those expected children quickly make rapid progress in learning basic skills. Writing skills are a focus for improvement and one group of more-able girls were retelling the story of Jack and the Beanstalk with themselves as a character. Throughout the school pupils' understanding of sounds and letters is good. In Key Stage 1 progress in reading, writing and mathematics is outstanding and by the end of Year 2 attainment is often significantly above that expected. A number of the pupils are working at levels well above those expected. In one lesson where teaching was outstanding pupils used a range of strategies to attempt some complex multi-step problems.

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Well-planned and effective interventions and one-to-one support ensure that the pupils with special educational needs, a number of whom have significant disabilities, are very well included in lessons and are making at least good and, in some cases, outstanding progress. There are no differences in the attainment of any other groups of pupils.

Quality of teaching

The teaching throughout the school is currently good. A growing amount of the teaching is outstanding. A small number of lessons are satisfactory and do not fully promote pupils' progress. The inspection evidence supports the school's own evaluation of the quality of teaching and of strengths and weaknesses. The school does not provide sufficient opportunities for the best practice to be spread and shared by teachers working together. The vast majority of parents and carers who completed questionnaires said that their child was well taught and making good progress.

The school caters for a number of pupils with significant disabilities or who have special educational needs. The quality of the support for these pupils is good and has a positive impact on their progress. This support is well coordinated and is the result of some very effective input from learning support assistants and teaching assistants throughout the school. Teachers provide pupils with helpful feedback through good quality marking and this is helping pupils understand how well they have done and how they can improve. This is supported by good contact with many parents and carers through the home-link books. These provide teachers with excellent opportunities to explain the work being covered as well as containing some examples of work and records of reading.

Teachers make good use of the excellent curriculum to provide a wide range of activities that are often linked to an over-arching theme. This makes an excellent contribution to the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Joint home-school projects have resulted in some very high quality work completed with parents' and carers' support and brought into school. Target setting is usually well-matched to pupils' prior attainment on an individual basis and pupils are aware of their targets and what they can do to improve. Teachers use effective questioning skills; for example, the teacher sharply focused pupils' thinking as they approached open-ended problems when Year 6 investigated two-dimensional shapes.

Children's learning needs in the Reception classes are very well provided for in a wide range of adult-led and child-initiated activities, often making good use of the outdoors. During the inspection, for example, a range of sowing and planting activities were taking place and these were very effective in creating interest and children's involvement, as well as extending their knowledge and appreciation of the natural world. The level of discussion between adults and children is very effective and supports children's developing vocabulary and speaking skills well.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is a very harmonious community. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is typically good, as is evident from school records and observations. Pupils' good behaviour in lessons helps their learning and they cooperate and collaborate effectively when the activities give them this opportunity. In many lessons they have a partner to whom they can talk and share their learning. In Year 1, for example, pupils shared their writing with each other very supportively and maturely.

Pupils throughout the school enjoy talking about and sharing their work. Their enthusiasm for school is not reflected in their attendance because many parents and carers take pupils out of school during term time. The school has worked hard with appropriate authorities to try and improve attendance but more remains to be done.

Pupils say that behaviour is good in lessons, and usually at other times as well. They say they feel safe in school and have a good understanding of what constitutes different types of bullying, including through the use of new technology. Pupils are confident that if bullying did occur it would be dealt with well by adults. They talk confidently about the adults they trust and would go to if they had a concern. Parents and carers say that their children feel safe and agree that behaviour in school is good.

Leadership and management

The headteacher provides the school with a clear vision based on continually improving and raising standards. She leads a very enthusiastic and able senior leadership team who use their talents and experience well across the school. There is a good team spirit and all staff are proud to be members of the school. The leadership of teaching is good and the impact of professional development has had a positive impact on the provision, for example, by raising standards in writing, particularly in Key Stage 1. This is one example that demonstrates the school's capacity to continue improving. Even so, it is not outstanding as more remains to be done to spread the existing outstanding practice more consistently across the school so that progress is further accelerated. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school has a good understanding of its strengths and areas requiring further improvement.

The leadership of literacy and numeracy is effective, and the leadership and management of the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. The headteacher has developed a detailed tracking system that enables staff to see clearly how well their pupils are progressing. This means any underachievement can be more quickly recognised and addressed, and extra support and expertise provided to suit the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. At regular meetings with teachers, senior leaders check on individual pupils' progress and reinforce the need for further improvement. The governing body provides good support and challenge for the school. Regular visits to

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school help them understand the outcomes of their decision-making.

The curriculum is outstanding because the work to enrich and extend pupils' learning through first-hand experiences is exceptional. It promotes good achievement in a range of subjects. This has a major impact on pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils' musical development is exceptionally well provided for through choirs, instrumental tuition and expert teaching. They make regular use of local visits to improve pupils' appreciation of the natural world. Residential experiences create excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and they grow in maturity. They learn about a range of different faiths and cultures, especially through links with schools in Europe and Africa. The curriculum is also having a positive impact on improving pupils' writing skills through a scheme for talking about stories before writing them. Furthermore, cross curricular themes, where teachers plan the development of basic skills, help pupils understand how their skills can be used independently and in a range of situations. However, the impact of these strategies has yet to secure consistently good rates of progress in writing in some Key Stage 2 classes. A wide range of visits and visitors are used to provide further relevance to enhance pupils' learning using specific expertise. The school is effective at promoting equality and tackling discrimination. The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements.

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.



11 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stonebow Primary School, Loughborough, LE11 4ZH

Thank you for the way you welcomed us to your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit and were pleased that we were able to talk to many of you. Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. This is important because it helps the teachers provide you with some interesting work, as well as keeping you safe and happy in school. Keep it up!

Stonebow is a good school. The teachers already provide you with an outstanding curriculum with lots of interesting activities to help you learn. You work well, and are reaching above average standards at the end of Year 6. Even so we think many of you are capable of making even more progress in your writing. We have asked your teachers to help you do this by sharing their good ideas and methods, and to continue their work to help you be better writers.

The teachers are working hard to help you learn. However, you cannot learn if you are not at school. A small number of you do not attend regularly enough and we have asked the school to work with your parents and carers and other agencies to make your attendance better. Your headteacher provides good leadership and the leadership of other staff and the governing body is also good.

Thank you again for your friendliness and help. We hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Stonebow and keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms
Lead inspector

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