

Styal Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111009
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	378214
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2012
Lead inspector	Kevin Johnson

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	99
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Jordan
Headteacher	Helen Smith
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed nine lessons and parts of lessons taught by four teachers and scrutinised the work in pupils' books. Discussions were held with pupils, school staff and members of the governing body as well as some parents and carers. The inspector took account of 29 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those completed by pupils and staff members. The school's work was observed and a wide range of documentation was scrutinised including that relating to national and school assessment data, minutes of governing body meetings, the curriculum, safeguarding and the school's self-evaluation.

Information about the school

Almost all pupils in this smaller than average-sized primary school are White British. A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

Among the school's recent awards are the Inclusion Quality Mark, Artsmark and Activemark. The school meets the current floor standard, which is the government's minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress at the end of Year 6.

A breakfast club is provided by the school during term time. After-school care, which is not managed by the governing body, is also available on site. It will receive its own inspection report which will be available on the Ofsted website.

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	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school which has continued to develop and make good improvements since the previous inspection. It is not yet outstanding because there is scope to improve the quality of teaching further and to broaden aspects of pupils' learning in mathematics. Pupils' excellent personal development is a major contribution to the school's community ethos and to their overall good achievement.
- Children's starting points are broadly typical for their age in most areas when they enter Reception but communication skills are generally lower than expected. They are well provided for and make good progress. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 to 6. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average.
- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. Teachers plan lessons well to take account of the full range of pupils' abilities and promote their good progress. The best practice, however, is not shared fully enough throughout the school and there are inconsistencies in the pace of some lessons and the quality of teachers' marking.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are outstanding. They are very enthusiastic about school and take great pride in what they do. Pupils say that they always feel safe in school. Attendance has improved considerably over the past three years and is average currently.
- School staff and the governing body work as an effective team. They share a clear vision and ambition for the school's future. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good and ensure that the quality of teaching continually strengthens. Well planned professional development contributes to the school's capacity to sustain improvement. The engaging curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. It does not, however, fully explore all possibilities for pupils to apply mathematics skills in practical ways in order to build on and extend their current achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall quality of teaching so that a higher proportion is outstanding by:
 - enabling the best practice to be shared throughout the school
 - ensuring that a good pace of learning is maintained in all lessons
 - marking all of pupils' work to the same standard and quality as that seen in literacy books.

- When planning for mathematics, consider ways of taking learning outside of the classroom so that pupils can apply and develop their mathematics skills in different practical ways.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children make good progress in Reception from broadly expected starting points. Their personal and communication skills are developed particularly well. Effective teaching of letters and the sounds they make gives early reading and writing a very good start. Exciting activities, such as adult's role play during a mathematics session, captivate children's interest and imagination so that they are eager to learn more. By the end of Reception all work securely within expected levels for their age in what they do and some are more advanced in their skills.

Pupils learn well in Years 1 to 6. They make good progress and talk confidently about their enjoyment and good achievement in art, music, science and sport for example. Attainment in English and mathematics is securely average and improving at the end of Year 2 and is above average at the end of Year 6

Parents and carers and pupils themselves share the view that progress is good. In lessons, pupils are extremely attentive and keen to learn. They enjoy challenges that test their skills, especially if laptops are involved, and opportunities to work together. Self-assessment is a strong feature of their learning, especially in writing, so they know how well they are making progress and what they need to do to improve. School leaders agree that pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to enhance their learning in mathematics through practical investigational work outside of the classroom.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. For some, the rate of progress is rapid. This is because learning plans and resources are carefully matched to their particular needs. This applies also to others whose circumstances may make them potentially vulnerable. School assessments show that attainment gaps between different groups of pupils are closing quickly. This is most evident in writing where a successful school strategy has resulted in all boys reaching at least their expected targets.

Following its success with writing the school has applied similar strategies to improve reading. This too is showing good impact. Attainment in reading is securely in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Year 6 pupils read fluently and have a good understanding of what they read. They are

knowledgeable about current authors and express clear preferences for the different kinds of novels available to them.

Quality of teaching

There is a brisk pace and plenty of challenge in most lessons, although pace does occasionally dip, for example, when the teacher's explanation is too long, or resources are not made ready in advance. The curriculum enables teachers to plan imaginatively so that lessons engage pupils well in activity and make them enjoyable as well as purposeful. Teachers use opportunities to promote reading, writing and speaking skills well, and computers are often used routinely for learning. Nevertheless, the best classroom practices, such as the high quality learning seen in a mathematics lesson, are not shared fully throughout the school. This outstanding learning resulted from excellent planning and very high expectations when pupils logged on to supermarket websites, compared the prices of ingredients and planned the food catering for an infants' tea party, using set recipes, all on a budget of £25.00. This activity also promoted pupils' personal skills and independence extremely well as they worked with partners and negotiated over the choices. The whole lesson was relevant, practical and an excellent test of pupils' application of mathematics skills.

Teachers deliver lessons confidently because subject knowledge is good and resources are used effectively. Teachers question pupils well to assess their understanding. Almost every lesson begins with a review of previous learning so that new knowledge and skills are built systematically. Year 5 and 6 pupils challenged each other to 'name six punctuation marks' or 'give five different genres of writing' as a warm-up quiz before the exciting literacy lesson that followed. Pupils know their targets for improvement in literacy and mathematics and teachers and teaching assistants work productively during lessons to monitor and ensure good progress. Teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. Their learning needs are carefully assessed by teachers and well focused plans drawn up to ensure their step by step progress. Marking in literacy books is of consistently good quality and helpful to pupils in guiding them to further improvement. In some other subjects, however, writing errors go unchallenged and there is less guidance for pupils, so marking does not have the same impact as it does in literacy. The overwhelming view of pupils is that teaching is good. That view is endorsed by the large majority of parents and carers. Many comment on how well their children make progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning underpin their consistently good achievement. They arrive in school punctually and their rapid and continuing increase in attendance means that it is now in line with the national average. Pupils get on extremely well with one another in the playground and very quickly resolve any differences. When they were asked to imagine the most serious incident that could take place in school, a group replied, 'A big argument.' They are invariably polite and well mannered and even the youngest pupils are keen to chat about the things they like in school. Pupils are very mindful of others. Older pupils take responsibility for younger ones and show mature initiative in the way they encourage and care for them during lunchtime and in the playground. Pupils' involvement in community work and projects through the National Trust and local churches as well as exchanges of information with school children in Spain and Jamaica gives an excellent boost to their cultural and community awareness.

Pupils have no concerns about their safety in school. They share trusting relationships with adults who care for them and are confident of their help when it is needed. Pupils feel safe in the playground. They are aware of the forms that bullying can take, including cyber-bullying and name-calling. Records show, and pupils confirm, that any such incidents are extremely rare. Pupils know how to manage potentially unsafe situations and keep themselves safe and healthy outside of school. Results from questionnaires and discussions indicate that parents and carers are almost unanimous in their agreement that behaviour is of a high standard and that children are safe and well cared for.

Leadership and management

Leaders are ambitious for the school. The headteacher's determined leadership, clear vision and high expectations underpin the school's good improvements. Staff members are unanimous in their support of the school's drive for success and comment on how much they enjoy working there. The school's capacity to sustain the momentum of improvement is good. Improved systems for checking pupils' progress and setting targets have had a positive impact in increasing the overall effectiveness of teaching. Teaching performance is continually evaluated, and improvement managed well. Professional development needs are identified through accurate self-evaluation resulting in the teaching skills of all staff being improved in writing, mathematics and the delivery of phonics (letters and sounds) lessons.

The governing body has strengthened its role since the previous inspection. It monitors the school's work well and provides effective challenge, for example, over teaching performance, standards and the setting of future targets. Safeguarding fully meets statutory requirements and all required training for staff is up to date. The school is proud of its Inclusion Quality Mark and strongly opposes all forms of discrimination. It is watchful over the academic and pastoral needs of all of its pupils to ensure their equality of opportunity.

The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well through interesting opportunities for them to learn and develop skills. An example is how the older pupils in the school have produced a video 'trailer' to whip up infant enthusiasm for a fairy story, in the form of a play, to be acted out in the woodland area of the school grounds. Skills and interest are nurtured further by a good range of after-school clubs and opportunities for all classes to experience residential visits. Literacy skills are developed strongly across subjects but there is scope for teachers to plan exciting practical mathematical investigation outside the classroom.

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.



22 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Styal Primary School, Wilmslow, SK9 4JE

Thank you very much for such a friendly welcome when I came to inspect your school. It was a genuine pleasure to talk to you and hear about some of the exciting activities that you enjoy. I learned from you and your teachers about your first class school band and I am really sorry I could not catch one of your performances.

I was very impressed by your excellent behaviour in school and how keen you are to learn. Your politeness and good manners are a credit to you all. I was also pleased to see that your attendance is continuing to improve. All of those things are important and it is right that you should continue to keep up those good qualities.

Styal is a good school. You make good progress and achieve well in English and mathematics as well as other subjects such as art, music and sports. Your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and they teach you well, just as you said in your questionnaires. Your school leaders also work hard to make sure you have all the opportunities you need to learn. They manage the school well.

Your parents and carers, the governing body and school staff are all very proud of the school and would like it to improve even further, as I am sure you would too. To help that to happen I have asked your teachers to do two things. The first is to make more of your lessons not just good, but outstanding. They can do that by sharing the best ideas and helping each other, making sure that nothing in lessons slows the pace of your learning and marking all of your work, in all subjects, as well as they do in literacy books. The second thing is to plan some mathematics learning outside the classroom and make use of your lovely school grounds for some practical investigations.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson
Lead inspector

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