

Staplegrove Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123801
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	380733
Inspection dates	30–31 May 2012
Lead inspector	Alex Baxter

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	196
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Bailey
Headteacher	Kirsti Nelson
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2008
School address	Hudson Way Staplegrove Taunton TA2 6UP
Telephone number	01823 337313
Fax number	01823 365539
Email address	admin@staplegrove.somerset.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Alex Baxter

Additional Inspector

Inge Fey

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors visited 20 lessons taught by 10 teachers and listened to pupils reading. The inspectors also observed break times, attended two assemblies and held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at plans and policies, records of assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress. The inspectors analysed 61 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those returned by 183 pupils and 19 staff.

Information about the school

This school is slightly smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a discrete Reception class. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Since September 2011 the school has worked in cooperation with another school. Each school retains its own governing body and the headteacher shares her duties between the two schools. A privately-funded pre-school childcare facility operates on the school site and shares some of the school's facilities. As it is managed independently, it was 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Staplegrove is a good, improving school where pupils achieve well. It has some excellent features, most notably a caring, inclusive ethos that values the unique contribution of each pupil and which strongly promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is not yet outstanding because pupils' mathematical and independent learning skills are not yet fully extended in all classes.
- Pupils achieve well. Children make good progress in Reception, and often do exceptionally well in developing their reading, social and independent learning skills. Similarly, some pupils with very complex needs also make significant gains because of the close support they receive from very capable staff. Pupils' good progress continues through the school and results in above average levels of attainment by the end of Year 6. Although pupils' numeracy skills have been improved since the previous inspection they are not fully enhanced across the range of subjects. Even so, pupils' reading and collaborative learning skills are often significantly better than those normally expected.
- Typically, teaching is good, with outstanding elements, including the teachers' probing questioning and encouraging response to pupils' ideas, which sustain very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' reading skills are taught systematically and very effectively as pupils move through the school. However, the pupils' independent learning skills, including their ability to use targets and assess the quality of their work, are developed less consistently.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Pupils' relationships and eagerness to learn collaboratively with, and from, each other are exemplary features. As a result, pupils love coming to school and attend well.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, are highly ambitious for the school. Efficient monitoring of provision and outcomes, accurate self-evaluation, targeted professional development and carefully-considered staff appointments, further secure the capacity to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the pupils' improved basic numeracy and calculation skills by:
 - providing more activities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills through solving real life problems across the range of subjects
 - refining the use of group targets so that they more closely match the pupils' needs.
- Further develop the pupils' independent learning skills by increasing opportunities for pupils to set up and follow their own lines of enquiry and to play a more effective role in evaluating the quality of their learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed the view that their children are making good progress and inspection findings endorse this view. The pupils' above average overall attainment by the time they leave Year 6, clearly seen in their work and responses in lessons, reflects their good achievement. However, problem solving skills in mathematics are not as advanced as English skills. This is because pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills are more consistently and effectively used and developed across the range of subjects. Similarly, except in Reception, pupils' independent learning skills are not enhanced as systematically and successfully as their collaborative skills. National assessments in Year 6 last year indicated that average attainers, especially girls, did not perform as well as others. Inspection evidence now shows that, following carefully targeted action this year, girls and average attainers are now achieving as well as their peers. Observations of lessons, discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of their work, also show that pupils, across the range of abilities, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and others with more ability, are making good progress from their differing starting points.

Children enter school with the skills that are normally expected for their age, although skills are weaker at times in communication, language and literacy. Children make a good start in Reception where their enthusiasm for school and learning together is nurtured extremely well. Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2 especially in reading where the pupils' ability to link sounds and letters (phonics) underpins their recognition of words. During large group introductions and guided reading in smaller groups, pupils' thoughtful responses showed their good understanding of the meanings of words. Observations of lessons also show that good progress continues through Years 3 to 6 and quickens as pupils' ability to reflect and discuss ideas matures. For example, pupils in Year 5 explored and discussed their ideas of what constituted good poetry. The strong focus on reading continues in all classes and, aided by regular reading at home, leads to pupils' above average attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave the school.

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Quality of teaching

Inspection findings support the views of parents, carers and pupils that teaching is good. Inspection evidence also shows that the quality of teaching has been steadily improving in recent years. However, whilst teaching continues to be good overall, as at the time of the previous inspection, several features are now particularly noteworthy. These include the teaching of reading, teachers' challenging questioning and the very supportive contributions by teaching assistants, and stimulating practical learning activities in Reception. As a result, pupils are quickening their progress through the school.

Teachers' encouragement of pupils to share ideas and learn by working together is another consistent strength across the school. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, pupils perceptively discussed the feelings of the main characters in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Other typical strengths include positively managing pupils' behaviour, valuing pupils' responses and sensitively including pupils with special educational needs. For example, during a bread-making investigation in Year 4, practical activity engaged pupils very well and enhanced their understanding of micro-organisms such as yeast and enabled everyone, including those with complex special educational needs, to share the same joy in discovery as others.

Teachers are also adept at developing pupils' understanding through discussion, and by indicating next steps for improvement when marking pupils' work. Skilful teaching of reading stems from the careful way that adults model clear speech and systematically develop pupils' ability to blend together the sounds of individual letters to read new words. Good links with parents encourage regular reading at home. Staff also model how to read with expression and promote the enjoyment of reading. Independent learning is an integral part of successful learning in Reception, for example role play in the 'ice-cream parlour'. However, elsewhere in the school, pupils are given fewer opportunities to develop their independent learning skills, for example by deciding for themselves what they want to find out, or by noting their own ideas about how to improve their work. Similarly, the curriculum in some classes provides limited opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills through solving problems in other subjects, at times constraining progress. Even so, the curriculum includes a range of motivating activities, such as craft work in the covered outdoor classroom, including during, before and after school clubs. On other occasions, gardening and the Forest School investigations also enrich pupils' enjoyment and strongly promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour continues to be outstanding, as it was at the time of the previous inspection, endorsing the view of the overwhelming majority of parents, carers and pupils. Pupils are typically extremely well behaved, polite and enthusiastic in lessons. The very supportive relationships and genuine concern for each other by all pupils and staff are a consistent strength. As a result, pupils come to school very

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confidently and attendance continues to be above average. Almost all parents' and carers' questionnaire responses agreed that their children are safe at school; a view fully supported by pupils and summed up by one pupil who said, 'Everyone is welcomed at this school and adults are very willing to listen and help.'

Pupils greatly enjoy school and are very keen to learn. They are particularly supportive of each other when sharing ideas as 'talk partners', collaborating in larger groups or when acting as play leaders and prefects at break times. No incidents of racial abuse have been reported in recent years. Pupils say there is no bullying at the school and that should bullying occur then the staff would swiftly put an end to it. Pupils expressed this view with confidence for, when questioned further, they clearly understood the different forms that bullying could take, for example cyber-bullying and racial and verbal abuse. A small number of pupils with complex emotional needs benefit from skilled adult support. As a result of this, and the high degree of understanding and empathy shown by other pupils, their behaviour has improved greatly and they are very well integrated. The very large majority of parental and pupils' responses in the questionnaires reflected full support for the school's caring, inclusive ethos.

Leadership and management

The talented headteacher promotes a team approach to leadership and management, which embraces and develops the skills of senior staff and members of the governing body. By working cooperatively and effectively, including with parents, the leadership team models good practice and consistently communicates high expectations and ambition. Rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching and of the subsequent impact on pupils' learning inform self-evaluation and ensure that the right areas for improvement are identified. Professional development of staff, increasingly across the two schools, has also led, for example, to improvement in pupils' reading skills. This illustrates the school's capacity to bring about further improvement. As yet though, some other initiatives, for example to progressively develop pupils' independent learning skills, are not strengths in all classes.

The school's caring ethos, which permeates the work of the school, is strongly promoted by the governing body and all staff, and is much appreciated by the parents. As a result, discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and equal opportunity is promoted and sustained at every opportunity. This is especially evident for example in the way disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully included and supported to narrow the attainment gap with other pupils, most notably in reading. Similar sharply targeted support is also enabling some average attaining pupils and an increasing number of more able and talented pupils to quicken their progress.

The governing body and all staff ensure that safeguarding procedures fully meet statutory requirements, including the vetting and training of staff. A broad, stimulating curriculum promotes the pupils' enjoyment and successful learning, typically evident as pupils, staff and parents celebrated the Queen's Jubilee tea party

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during the inspection. These events, assemblies and regular topics such as 'Sounds of the Sea' and 'The Olympics' further illustrate the school's carefully planned and thoughtful promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which lies at the heart of their good achievement.

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.

31 May 2012

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of Staplegrave Church of England Primary School, Taunton
TA2 6UP**

Thank you for the very friendly and polite way that you welcomed and assisted us during the recent inspection. We really enjoyed visiting your school. We were particularly impressed by your outstanding behaviour, the very supportive and enthusiastic way that you helped each other to learn and by the consideration that you showed to those of you who find learning difficult. We were also very pleased to read in your questionnaires and to hear you say that you feel very safe in school because staff care for you so well. We are pleased to agree with you and your parents and find that Staplegrave is a good school that continues to improve.

These are some of the other things we liked most.

- You work very hard and make good progress. You enjoy reading and learning from books because you are taught and learn how to read extremely well.
- Everyone who attends the school is welcomed and treated with equal respect.
- Teaching is good because teachers and their assistants encourage you to learn and value your efforts.
- You love coming to school and your attendance is good because you know that the staff have the full support of your parents and work well together to promote your good achievement.
- The headteacher, senior staff and members of the governing body lead the school well and are determined to make it even better.

To help the school in its continued drive for improvement, we have asked the teachers to improve your mathematical skills further through solving real life problems across the range of subjects. We also want the teachers to develop your ability to check and improve your own work and to learn more independently.

You can help by continuing to work so well with each other, but increasingly think for yourself how you can improve before you ask for help from your friends or an adult.

Yours sincerely

Alex Baxter
Lead inspector

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