

Stoke St Gregory Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123802
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	380734
Inspection dates	12–13 July 2012
Lead inspector	Juliet Jaggs

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	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Stables
Headteacher	Barbara Berks
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2009
School address	Huntham Lane Stoke St Gregory Taunton TA3 6EG
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Introduction

Inspection team

Juliet Jaggs

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed teaching and learning in nine part lessons taught by five teachers. She held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection and observed the school's work as well as looking at self-evaluation documentation, development planning, assessment information and safeguarding procedures. The inspector analysed 55 questionnaires received from parents and carers.

Information about the school

Stoke St Gregory Church of England Primary School is smaller than most other primary schools and a relatively high number of its pupils leave and join the school during the academic year. At the time of the previous inspection, it was part of a federation but this arrangement came to an end in March 2012. Since June 2012, the headteacher has been employed on a part-time basis for three days per week. On the remaining days the school is led by the senior teacher. The largest groups of pupils are of White British heritage, with the proportion of pupils who are from other minority ethnic backgrounds well below average. There are currently no pupils who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average, with most of these pupils' needs associated with speech, language and communication. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has been awarded the Arts Mark silver standard accreditation and healthy schools status.

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. It is not yet good because the management of its performance has not been concerted enough to ensure that pupils make good progress throughout the school. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Improved systems for monitoring pupils' progress have had a positive impact on raising attainment by the end of Year 2 so that it is now significantly better than it was at the time of the previous inspection. Their impact on accelerating progress in Key Stage 2 has not been as marked. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is average although they reach higher standards in reading.
- The leadership of teaching has been effective in improving teaching, especially in Key Stage 1. Generally, teachers use a variety of strategies to help pupils reflect on their learning and make good progress in Key Stage 1. While teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 2, there are too few opportunities for pupils to form their own ideas and think about their own learning to support better progress. Similarly, in the Early Years Foundation Stage children do not have sufficient opportunities to explore their own ideas.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good; they have positive attitudes to learning and encourage one another in following instructions conscientiously. Pupils feel safe and make a special effort to help one another feel safe.
- The school makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The welcoming school community gives pupils a sense of self-worth so they demonstrate conviction in their beliefs. Pupils enjoy a variety of educational visits that enhance their learning and the standard of music in the school is high. The curriculum does not include a sharp focus on improving pupils' progress in writing and mathematics in their topic work.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, so that by July 2013 much of it is good through:
 - ensuring that teachers make pupils aware of what they will be learning during activities so that they take more responsibility for their progress as they are learning
 - providing children in the Early Years Foundation Stage with more opportunities to learn by investigating in different ways
 - ensuring that teachers prepare a greater variety of materials and activities with increasing levels of challenge to meet the needs of different groups of learners in their class
 - giving pupils opportunities to think and talk about their learning in different ways by asking more open questions.

- Improve the quality of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - ensuring that evaluation procedures are used to identify specific actions for improvement that are sharply focused on improving pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2
 - monitoring the performance of the school more frequently to ensure that its effectiveness is sustained.

- Develop the curriculum so that by December 2012 planning documents clearly identify how standards in literacy and numeracy will be improved during topic work.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with the range of skills that are generally as expected for their age. A few of them have difficulty with communication and language but the school works effectively to help children develop these aspects, although they do not have enough opportunities to explore ideas for themselves. By the time they move into Key Stage 1, children's attainment is broadly average. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1, with the result that standards are above average and progress is good in reading, writing and mathematics.

Following a sustained trend of good achievement in Key Stage 2, there was a significant drop in standards achieved by pupils who left the school in 2011. Pupils in the current Year 6 are attaining at higher levels, especially the proportion working at the higher Level 5. Progress for this group has been satisfactory from their starting points. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress because of the range of support they receive. Most parents and

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carers agree that their children make progress at the school, with only a few commenting that their children were not sufficiently challenged. Inspection findings confirm that in lessons, especially in Key Stage 2, not all pupils are challenged sufficiently.

In lessons, pupils show good levels of sustained concentration and collaborate successfully, especially in discussing the tasks set and in answering key questions set by teachers. For example, pupils in one Key Stage 1 lesson talked together effectively and made progress calculating sums by recognising when 'like numbers' could be multiplied rather than added. Pupils learn well by transferring curriculum enrichment experiences to the classroom which also makes a significant contribution to their personal development. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 were so outraged at the proposed closure of a local conservation area that they were able to write about it convincingly.

Pupils make good progress in reading. By the end of Key Stage 1, many decode relatively complex words independently so that their attainment is above average. Pupils take increasing responsibility for selecting their own reading material in order to enhance their progress and their attainment is above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils joining the school part way through a key stage adjust quickly to the school's reading routines and they make similarly good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teachers make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development by planning creative tasks that encourage pupils to be inventive. For example, pupils enjoyed thinking of ideas for a poem about imaginary sports equipment and a few were able to evoke emotional images. In better lessons, teachers consider how themes develop and they plan activities that encourage pupils to link new learning logically. This was seen in one class where pupils were quickly reminded of various number bonds in a lively introduction so they were able to propose correct answers in the subsequent activity about corresponding fractions. However, in Key Stage 2, there are occasions when teachers describe the nature of a task without making pupils fully aware of what they should be learning and, as a result, progress is satisfactory rather than good.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage often have opportunities to practise using the sounds made by letters to write independently. Teachers prepare a range of purposeful activities but tasks do not always encourage children to learn by investigating. In Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers monitor pupils' book choices carefully so that pupils sustain their progress in reading by making appropriate choices.

Teachers' planning, especially in Key Stage 2, does not always meet fully the differing learning needs of pupils and this contributes to satisfactory rather than good progress. Not all pupils are challenged to use and apply their previous learning in their work. Some teachers have established effective systems that enable pupils to assess their own learning. Pupils in Key Stage 1 confidently assess their own

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progress by using target sheets and they apply simple proof-reading techniques to check the accuracy of their writing. Some teachers modify their plans in response to the progress made by individual pupils during lessons and pupils' work is marked frequently and usually shows how it could have been improved. Other assessment procedures are less effective. On occasions, teachers ask closed questions that prompt an accurate response but do not enable pupils to think about their learning more deeply or to consolidate it by expressing ideas in their own words.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are usually well supported. In one better lesson, the teaching assistant explained spelling rules clearly so that pupils applied them successfully on their own. Occasionally, adults complete pupils' responses too quickly so pupils do not have the opportunity to resolve questions for themselves. Most parents and carers believe that their children are well taught at the school, with a few of them appreciating the opportunity to collaborate with their child during homework tasks. Inspection evidence found that teaching is satisfactory overall.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils demonstrate high levels of empathy so they are able to consider one another's perspective and interact sensitively. This means they work together effectively in teams because they negotiate roles and agree plans calmly. For example, pupils responded well when they were given the responsibility for organising their leavers' performance. It was the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who identified the emotional significance of this event so demonstrating the positive impact on their spiritual development. Most pupils demonstrate a commitment to learning so they settle quickly to tasks. They are keen to share ideas and readily commend one another's efforts. Disruptive incidents are infrequent and the standard of behaviour is consistently good over time. This is a view shared by pupils and their parents and carers. Pupils' attendance is above average.

Pupils have a good understanding of the various types of bullying and they are keen to make one another feel valued within the community in order to reduce the likelihood of one another being bullied. Members of the school council take an active lead to complement this approach by representing their peers at local events that heighten awareness of cyber-bullying and then sharing their experiences on their return to school. Most pupils report that instances of bullying are rare and that if they do occur, they are confident that staff will act swiftly and effectively. There was overwhelming agreement among pupils, staff, and parents and carers that pupils are safe in school but a very few representatives from each of these groups shared concerns about bullying in their questionnaire returns.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has established a strong sense of collective responsibility for pupils' welfare. All staff are determined to ensure there is no discrimination and that all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn well. Teachers communicate frequently to

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prioritise the achievement of individual pupils and these informal discussions have recently been enhanced with more systematic arrangements for monitoring pupils' progress. This has a positive impact on the rising trend in achievement since the last inspection, particularly at Key Stage 1, for all groups of pupils, and the reversal of the recent drop in standards in Key Stage 2. This demonstrates that the school has the capacity for implementing effective improvements. The strengths in pupils' behaviour identified in the last inspection have been sustained. Members of the governing body have been instrumental in supporting leaders as they have defined the future of the school since the conclusion of the federation arrangement.

The school's self-evaluation is broadly accurate and effective professional development activities are having a positive impact on the quality of teaching. For example, middle leaders have recently shared their new expertise in the teaching of mathematics and pupils have made accelerated progress using problem-solving techniques as a result.

The curriculum has been enriched to include a variety of educational visits that enhance pupils' learning and promote their personal development. As one pupil explained, 'We may be a small school, but we do big things.' Leaders in the Early Years Foundation Stage adapt their timetable creatively to ensure that children have opportunities to learn outdoors as the layout of the school does not afford them the opportunity to do so more routinely. Pupils' commitment to sporting competitions and local music events supports their cultural development well and reflects the awards the school has received. School leaders are reviewing the curriculum in order to provide pupils with more opportunities for applying their basic skills in a variety of contexts. Plans do not place sufficient emphasis on improving pupils' progress in writing and mathematics during topic work.

Senior leaders establish important links with other local providers to prioritise pupils' welfare. Shared-planning procedures enable children to move with confidence from the neighbouring nursery school and the school seeks regular guidance to ensure that other safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. Many parents and carers value the school's distinctive caring ethos that enables their children to learn happily.

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.



16 July 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Stoke St Gregory Church of England Primary School,
Taunton, TA3 6EG**

I should like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you about your learning and I was pleased to attend your leavers' performance for a short time. Your views have been taken into account and I have found that yours is a satisfactory school. Here are some of the key findings from the report.

- Your behaviour is good and you feel safe at school. Your parents and carers are pleased that the school takes good care of you.
- You work hard in lessons and you make satisfactory progress. Your attainment in English and mathematics is average but the standards you reach in reading are higher.
- You have good opportunities to visit the local area and I was impressed that you felt so strongly about the future of the nearby nature reserve.
- Your teachers encourage you to be imaginative in your learning and it is good that some of you are able to use your target sheets to work out how to make better progress.

I have asked the school leaders to continue to improve the school by:

- making sure that more of your lessons are good, especially in letting you know what you are going to be learning during lessons so that you can think about this as you work and aim to achieve it
- making sure that you know how to produce high-quality writing and mathematics while you are studying different topics
- changing the way they check how the school is doing so that they can decide how to help you more quickly.

You can help by continuing to do your best and by taking opportunities to talk to your teachers about your learning.

Yours sincerely

Juliet Jaggs
Lead inspector

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