

Starcross Primary School

New Road, Starcross, Exeter, EX6 8QD

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is good school.

- Since the last inspection senior leaders have taken decisive steps to improve teaching. The strong focus on pupils' achievement has helped to raise expectations and accelerate their progress.
- Over the last year, pupils' faster progress has resulted in good achievement in both English and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment is rising year on year so that they now reach levels above those expected for their age.
- Teaching is consistently good. There are some outstanding aspects, such as the teachers' skill in devising activities that interest pupils and extend their thinking.
- Good behaviour ensures that pupils learn well in lessons. Pupils feel very safe because the school provides a caring and supportive environment.
- The development of pupils' social skills is outstanding in the way that they use their initiative and support each other.
- Knowledgeable and dedicated governors give good levels of support and challenge to the school's leaders. They have a clear view of how well the school is performing and their financial management is extremely effective.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In some lessons teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunity to learn independently and find things out for themselves.
- The targets and timescales in the school's improvement plans are not precise enough for leaders and managers to judge how successful they have been.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the governors, the headteacher, and the school’s senior staff. Also the lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as consulting informally with parents before school.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a range of documents, including the school’s improvement plans, data on pupils’ current progress, planning and monitoring files, the minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to special educational needs, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, talked to them in lessons and evaluated samples of their work.

Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Mark Anderson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is above average and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British and come from the surrounding area.
- The school offers no alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Dawlish Learning Partnership.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring teachers provide enough opportunities for pupils to learn independently and evaluate their own learning.
- Improve the effectiveness of the school's improvement planning by:
 - making targets for improvement sharper so that leaders and managers can monitor and judge the success of the plans more easily
 - including more precise timescales and milestones so that plans can be tracked more effectively during the year.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school in the Reception class with skills in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress and achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make).
- Since the last inspection levels of attainment have risen in both key stages. This is because pupils' progress has accelerated, especially in mathematics, over the past year. Attainment is above average for the current Year 6 in all subjects. The gap between the progress made by boys and girls closes as pupils move through the school so that both are now achieving well.
- Pupils' standards in reading are well above average and they develop their confidence and competence as readers very quickly. Good systems for developing reading skills are ensuring that all pupils are developing a deeper understanding of texts and a love of books.
- The introduction of a rigorous system for tracking pupils' progress is ensuring that any pupils who fall behind are identified quickly and helped to catch up. The new system of individual targets is motivating pupils to achieve more.
- The school ensures that all pupils are given an equal opportunity to succeed. The pupils supported by the pupil premium are benefiting from additional support in mathematics through the 'Learning Zone' initiative. Average point scores gaps in attainment between this group and others are closing and their progress overall is good. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress.
- In lessons, pupils learn, especially when they are required to work independently and then present their findings to others.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good with some outstanding aspects. Mostly teachers are skilful in creating independent activities that extend pupils' thinking. For example, in one effective Years 4 and 5 mathematics lesson, as a result of what they had found out for themselves, a group of pupils used the large whiteboard to demonstrate to their classmates how to plot coordinates in all four quadrants.
- Good support from the local authority consultant has helped to make the teachers' planning more systematic so that the teaching activities have clearer steps. However, occasionally, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to extend their thinking by discovering things for themselves and then evaluating what they have learnt.
- Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are taught well. Pupils have very good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in lessons; for example, a group of Year 1 pupils took turns in groups to re-enact the story of Little Red Riding Hood, devising and refining their own script as they went along.
- Marking in books and feedback to pupils about their work are of good quality, helping to promote further thinking and correct misconceptions. The new system of individual targets in writing and mathematics has been well received and is enabling pupils to understand how to reach the next level.
- The pupil premium and the allocation for special educational needs have been used to provide small-group teaching that focuses on closing the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, especially in mathematics. Teaching assistants give good support to those individuals who need additional input in specific areas such as language skills and handwriting.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Typically pupils behave well in and around the school. They are polite, helpful and very

considerate of each other. They pay good attention in lessons and are motivated to succeed. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because sometimes pupils do not apply themselves fully to their learning.

- Pupils, their parents and the staff are positive about the standards of behaviour at the school. Pupils are clear that there is no bullying but they are aware of the different forms this can take, such as cyber-bullying on the internet and racist name-calling. They have complete confidence in the adults to sort out any minor problems that may arise.
- Pupils report that they feel extremely secure because of the good care the adults provide and the safe environment of the school. Parents agree that their children are looked after very well with regard to both their physical and emotional well-being.
- Behaviour is managed effectively because of the positive relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils of different ages work and play alongside each other harmoniously in a very close-knit community. Initiatives, such as the 'chit-chat shack' in the playground provide opportunities for pupils to reflect and talk about their feelings.
- Pupils are proud of their school and act as good ambassadors in a range of activities that take them out into the local community. They enjoy the roles and responsibilities that the school has to offer such as library and telephone monitors at lunchtime and they carry these out with impressive levels of maturity.
- Attendance is now above average. Punctuality is good because the school has taken firm steps to discourage lateness and any absence is followed up promptly.

The leadership and management are good

- With good leadership at all levels the pace of improvement in the school has accelerated since the last inspection. The headteacher, supported by a very able deputy headteacher and other senior staff, has introduced effective initiatives that have improved the quality of teaching and accelerated pupils' progress.
- Improvements to the way pupils' attainment and progress are tracked and monitored have enabled senior leaders to manage the performance of teachers more robustly.
- Long-term plans demonstrate the ambition of the school's leadership to raise achievement still further. Good input from the local authority adviser and the local learning partnership, has led to more accurate monitoring. However, targets in these plans are not yet sharp enough or supported by precise timescales and milestones.
- Literacy is well led and managed. The introduction of the more systematic teaching of phonics to target precisely different levels of ability has helped to close the gap between the attainment of boys and girls.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of interesting experiences for pupils that enrich their learning and widen their horizons. Information and communication technology is integrated well across all subjects. Improvements to the mathematics curriculum are having a good impact on pupils' rates of progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Assemblies, such as the one inspectors saw about the slave trade, are designed to be thought-provoking and enlightening. The weekly celebration assembly is much appreciated by parents along with the many varied community events.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils are met and managed effectively. Staff training is up to date and the systems for managing the safety of the site are thorough.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school because of their effective system for monitoring the standards of teaching and achievement. All governors are involved in this process which enables them to provide a high level of challenge to the school's senior leaders. They have kept up to date with their training through the local authority so that they are aware of how well the school is

performing compared to other schools both locally and nationally. They know how the performance of staff is managed and the way this is aligned to pay progression. Their firm grasp of financial management has ensured that the quality of the school's provision has been maintained despite budgetary pressure. They are aware of how the pupil premium has been allocated and keep a close watch on its impact on pupils' attainment.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113219
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	405457

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	151
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Hope
Headteacher	Iannis Ireland
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 March 2011
Telephone number	01626 890454
Fax number	01626 891663
Email address	headteacher@starcross-primary.devon.sch.uk

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