

Stanbridge Lower School

Tilsworth Road, Stanbridge, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 9HY

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress to reach the levels expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils do best of all in writing. They get plenty of chances to write in English lessons and in other subjects.
- The school is a happy place. Behaviour is good and pupils say they feel safe.
- Teaching is good. Staff check regularly how well each pupil is doing and decide how best to help those falling behind. They do this effectively, so all make good progress.
- Everyone is valued and welcome, regardless of background or ability. Excellent relationships with parents and carers are central to the school's work.
- Leaders link staff training well to the school's needs, so the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement continue to improve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in mathematics is not as good as it is in reading and writing. Pupils have too few chances to do practical work and tackle real-life problems in mathematics.
- Teachers do not always give all pupils work that is well matched to their ability right from the start of lessons.
- Teaching assistants are not sufficiently involved throughout lessons, particularly when pupils learn about letters and sounds.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons or parts of lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher, and one assembly. Six members of staff were seen teaching.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, members of the governing body, school leaders and staff. Discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to pupils during lessons about their work, looked at their books and listened to pupils read.
- The inspector took account of 11 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke to parents and carers during the inspection.
- The inspector analysed responses from 15 questionnaires completed by school staff.
- The inspector observed the school's work, looked at progress and attendance information, improvement plans, systems to check the quality of teaching, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Vivienne McTiffen, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. About a third of the school's population come from travelling communities. A considerable proportion of these pupils join or leave the school at other than the normal times during the school year.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium), is average.
- Older children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught full-time in the Reception class. Nursery-aged children are taught in a part-time class known as the Pre-school, which opens every morning.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club which are both managed by the governing body.
- The school holds the Investors in Families award.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in mathematics by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to do practical tasks and solve problems in mathematics lessons and other subjects
 - helping pupils to understand how mathematics is used in real life and making sure that pupils have the right counting apparatus and resources to help them to do well.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - making sure pupils get on quickly with work that is well matched to their ability from the start of lessons
 - making the most of all adult help throughout lessons, especially when pupils learn about letters and sounds.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start in the Pre-school and Reception class with skills that are lower than those expected for their age. They settle well and develop confidence and independence. They make good progress in reading and writing although, by the time they move to Year 1, their level of achievement is still below average.
- Pupils do well throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average. The school's information and work in books show that, by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 4, they are working at the expected levels and some, especially more-able pupils and those who are settled, do even better.
- Although children make a good start in learning about letters and sounds in the Pre-school and in the Reception class, they do not always do as well in other classes. The school does not make sufficient use of all staff to make sure that pupils do work that is just right for their ability.
- Pupils do well in writing because they talk about their ideas before they write and often use stories as a starting point. For example, during the inspection, they were inspired by their teacher's story-telling to understand a character's feelings and think about words to improve their own writing.
- Pupils say they like stories and reading. They read regularly and use books and computers to find out information, especially for class topics such as the Romans or mini-beasts. They know about various authors and talk readily about the books they are reading.
- Pupils add, subtract, multiply and divide competently, but opportunities to do practical tasks or solve problems in mathematics lessons and other subjects are limited. Although there are some examples, such as Pre-school children doing 'shopping' in the class shop, pupils do not have sufficient chance to understand how mathematics is used in real life.
- Pupils make good gains in their personal development. They take part in 'Sing Up' sessions which lead to school and public performances. They enjoy perfecting their individual talents to present to others during assemblies. Team-building and social skills develop well during residential visits, sports and school council activities.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive extra help so they successfully achieve their learning goals, especially those who are settled and remain in the school for a period of time. Those who find it difficult to behave have good relationships with staff and show improvement over time.
- Pupils from the Traveller community make progress at the same rates as their classmates when they are in school. The school's flexible arrangements mean that these pupils are very well received and settle quickly if they join mid-term.
- The pupil premium funding is spent on extra resources and adult help to meet the needs of individual eligible pupils. The school's information shows that those pupils who are settled make good progress. Others, who spend periods of time away from school, do not have enough time to catch up and can be two or three terms behind their peers in reading, writing and mathematics, but do as well as others when they are in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have good relationships with pupils and value everyone's efforts and contributions. They build self-esteem through positive comments and encouragement. Behaviour is managed

consistently well. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and how they should behave.

- Teachers skilfully pick up and address any misconceptions by pupils in lessons. They follow a consistent approach when marking pupils' work and offer useful tips on how to improve. They make sure pupils are clear about their learning and what they need to do by the end of lessons.
- In English and mathematics, teachers work with groups of pupils of similar ability so that less-able pupils make small steps in their learning whilst the more-able receive higher level work. However, within these groups, teachers sometimes give pupils work that is too easy at the start, so they are not challenged sufficiently until later in the lesson.
- Teachers make sure pupils develop the skills they need to do their work successfully. For example, in Year 4, pupils are regularly set the challenge of beating their personal best when learning their multiplication tables. In some mathematics lessons, less-able pupils are not suitably equipped for their work because they are not provided with the right counting apparatus and resources to help them to do well.
- In the Pre-school and in the Reception class, staff make good use of indoor and outdoor spaces with a range of inviting activities which children enjoy. There is a good mix of tasks led by adults and those children choose for themselves which promotes free choice and exploration. Staff encourage children's participation and develop their speaking and listening skills well.
- Staff listen to pupils read regularly. Books are well organised in attractive reading and library areas so pupils choose for themselves. There is a good balance between story books and information books which staff make available during topic work for reference.
- Teaching assistants often work with small groups and individuals. They help pupils to understand their learning and achieve their targets. Although teaching assistants are usually present throughout lessons, they are not always fully involved at the start of lessons and when pupils learn about letters and sounds.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well. They say they like school and enjoy the range of activities. They pay attention in lessons and try their best. They value their teachers and say, 'Teachers are really nice and give you good work.'
- Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for, a view strongly supported by parents and carers. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong because there are clear guidelines. Pupils are confident that the school will get to the root of any problems that do arise. One said, 'Miss Godwin does all she can to stop anything bad.'
- Pupils recognise that some find it difficult to behave well and show understanding towards each other. The school's logs show improvement over time in the behaviour of individuals because each pupil's needs are well understood. The 'Lunchtime Club' plays a major role in helping those who need a calm and supportive environment.
- Bullying or racist incidents are rare but stringently recorded and followed up. Pupils are helped to deal with issues that might arise through discussions in assemblies and lessons. They recognise different forms of bullying and show a good understanding of how to stay safe, including when using computers.
- The large majority of pupils attend well. Overall figures are affected by the mobility of some pupils but the school does all it can to promote good attendance and liaises successfully with families. The school's Investor in Families award reflects its commitment to involving families in

their children's learning.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection, the school has successfully maintained good quality teaching and good achievement. The headteacher's strong leadership revolves around excellent relationships with pupils, staff and parents and carers. One parent commented, 'The headteacher is one in a million.'
- The headteacher is very clear about what she wants the school to achieve. Staff value the support they receive and are well prepared for leadership roles. Training and targets for staff to improve their work are well matched to the school's needs. Good links with other schools enable staff to share expertise and training.
- In line with local authority policy, this good school receives light-touch support. Outside help has developed the quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, leading to raised achievement. The school's view of itself is realistic and its plans for improvement are well formulated.
- The school offers a good range of subjects. Good partnerships with local businesses, the church and outside agencies enhance learning experiences. Pupils meet those from other schools and share residential trips. They raise funds and maintain links with pupils in schools abroad.
- Leaders understand the diversity of the school's population well. They are determined to give all an equal chance to do the best they can whilst they are at the school. Each pupil's progress is carefully checked and those falling behind receive extra support to help them catch up.
- The newly opened breakfast and after-school clubs provide useful extra facilities for parents and carers and a good range of activities for pupils at the beginning and end of the school day.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are committed to improvement. They use expertise in their ranks well and are keen to hone their skills further to ensure their governance is the best it can be. They know how well the school is doing and what it needs to do to improve. Governors make sure the information they receive helps them to understand data about pupils' achievement. As a result, they are well informed about the progress pupils make, including the progress of those for whom the school receives the pupil premium. They raise questions if pupils are not doing well enough and are committed to ensuring equal opportunity for all. They know how good teaching leads to good achievement and are involved in arrangements for staff development and managing teachers' performance. They ensure that teachers are suitably rewarded for good work, and that any issues in teaching are addressed well. Governors carry out their responsibilities well and ensure safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

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	109482
Local authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	412430

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	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Symonds
Headteacher	Rosemary Goodwin
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2009
Telephone number	01525 210328
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