

Stanwix Primary School

Church Street, Stanwix, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA3 9DW

Inspection dates

30 April–1 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Throughout their time at Stanwix pupils make good progress overall. Their achievement in reading is much higher than the national average; in mathematics their achievement is outstanding.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. There are many interesting activities in lessons which the pupils enjoy. Pupils particularly enjoy their topic work which captures their imagination and helps them to further develop their literacy and numeracy skills.
- All staff are dedicated to providing a stimulating and safe environment in which pupils learn well and develop into responsible young people. The school's relationship with parents is exceptionally strong.
- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. From an early age, pupils clearly enjoy school and this is demonstrated in their eagerness to learn. They show a great deal of respect towards each other and to all the staff and visitors to the school. They are polite, courteous, work hard and take pride in all that they do.
- This is an improving school where leaders and managers have successfully introduced recent changes to enhance further the quality of teaching. The dedicated governing body provides a good balance of support and challenge for the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils make better than expected progress, particularly in writing. In some lessons, pupils are not always given work which challenges them to reach their full potential.
- Occasionally, teachers do not check on pupils' understanding regularly enough during lessons. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' marking and pupils are not always given time in lessons to improve their work.
- Some plans for whole-school improvement lack precise timescales.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 teachers and visited 24 lessons. There were two joint observations, one with the headteacher and the other with the deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils reading.
- Discussions were held with school staff, groups of pupils, parents, senior teachers and subject leaders, a representative from the local authority and the members of the governing body.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school's self-evaluation and development plans, local authority reports, records of pupils' current attainment and progress, documents relating to attendance and pupils' behaviour, and pupils' work in books.
- There were 63 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) prior to the inspection and these were taken into account when planning the inspection. A further 50 responses were recorded during the inspection and these were also considered by the inspectors.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Adrian Francis	Additional Inspector
Derek Sleightholme	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Stanwix is a larger than average sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and the children of military personnel) is much lower than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is about half the national average as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- There have been significant changes in staff since the previous inspection and a new management structure took effect in September 2012.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching to further raise achievement, particularly in writing, by:
 - planning more precisely to provide appropriate challenge for pupils of all ability levels so that pupils reach their full potential
 - ensuring greater consistency in teachers' written feedback to ensure clarity in pupils' understanding of how to improve their work and providing regular time to correct and edit their work
 - regularly and consistently checking how well pupils are understanding their work and adapting lessons accordingly.
- Ensure that managers at all levels use their planning and checking of how well pupils are progressing to inform necessary changes within prescribed timescales.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children settle very well into the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is as a result of very effective transition arrangements between school and home. Most children join Reception with skills that are in line with those typically expected for their age. Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this continues in Years 1 and 2. They join Year 3 with attainment levels which are higher than those typical for their age.
- Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress overall in English and reach standards which are higher than the national average. Achievement in English is good but reading is much stronger than writing. Not enough pupils make better than expected progress in writing. Strategies to address this are at an early stage but pupils do now have more opportunities to develop their writing across other subjects and through topics.
- Pupils who read to the inspectors demonstrated how to work out unfamiliar words and read with expression. Older pupils talked animatedly about the range and amount of books. By the time they leave school pupils' ability to read is exceptionally strong.
- Standards reached in mathematics by the end of Year 6 are exceptionally high and the achievement of pupils is outstanding. They systematically develop skills in mental mathematics and problem-solving which prepares them extremely well for the next stage in their education.
- Pupils who are supported by extra funding (the pupil premium) have been making similar, and sometimes better progress compared to that of their classmates. Test results show that there are no significant gaps between the standards they reach and those reached by other pupils in school. In 2012 pupils eligible for free school meals attained standards similar to those of their peers in English and in mathematics. This demonstrates effective use of the extra money and demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to that of other pupils due to timely and sharply focused help from teachers and teaching assistants.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school and some teaching is outstanding.
- Where teaching is at its best, teachers and teaching assistants plan lessons very well together to ensure that pupils are given work to get the best out of them. Consequently, pupils learn rapidly because they are given work which matches their ability and they are finding out things for themselves.
- An example of this was seen in a mathematics lesson. The teacher asked the pupils to plan a journey from Carlisle to London on a specific date with a deadline for the time of arrival. With partners, they used the Internet to help in planning a specific route using different modes of transport. Pupils were highly motivated and clearly enjoying finding out things for themselves and using their skills in mathematics to make their choices. Outstanding progress in problem-solving was made by all pupils in this lesson.
- In a Year 3 English lesson, good teaching was seen. The teacher had carefully planned for pupils to learn how to independently improve the stories they had started in a previous lesson. As a class, they looked at a piece of work together to show their understanding of how to improve the writing with better punctuation and by adding adverbs and adjectives. They then worked on their own story and made good progress in editing and improving their work.
- Changes have been made to the teaching of reading skills. These have been successful and have resulted in improvements in pupils' ability to link letters to the sounds they make.
- Occasionally, teachers do not plan work precisely enough to meet the needs of all ability groups. They do not always check how well pupils are understanding their work and adapt their lessons

accordingly which slows progress.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have secured improvements in the accuracy of teachers' assessment of pupils' work. Although there are excellent examples, particularly in Year 2, of detailed next steps in how to improve their writing and time built into lessons for pupils to edit and correct their work, this is not yet consistent throughout the school.
- The pupil premium funding is used primarily to provide precise activities for individuals and, sometimes, groups of pupils. Good relationships and tasks that are tailored very well to pupils' different needs mean that there are no gaps between those pupils whose circumstances might put them at risk and their peers in school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

- When children join Stanwix, they learn from an early age how to value each other, the adults around them and their strong school community which one member of staff described as 'a big family'. There is an exceptionally strong atmosphere of mutual respect starting in Reception and continuing throughout the school. This leads to pupils feeling happy, safe and secure. This is reflected in their above average attendance and their punctuality in the mornings, which is very good indeed.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well both in lessons and around the school and this results in extremely good attitudes to learning and care towards each other. This was reflected in conversations with pupils and their families, and from the vast majority of views expressed on Parent View. Almost all parents expressed their confidence in the school.
- The older pupils really do enjoy taking responsibility and train as young leaders, organising sporting activities for the younger children.
- Sport plays a big part in school life and staff and specialist sports coaches ensure that teams do well in local and national competitions.
- It is clear that there is confidence in Stanwix to provide not only a good standard of education for children but also to ensure that children are safe and secure and learn how to keep themselves safe both within the school environment and beyond. The annual Healthy Lifestyles Week brings in professionals to deepen pupils' understanding of keeping healthy.
- Pupils say that bullying is not an issue at this school although they do learn about different types of bullying and, for example, how to stay safe when using the Internet. They are adamant that they could turn to any adult in the school if they felt unsafe and that there are clear procedures that would deal with issues, should they arise.
- The creative curriculum is enhanced by a raft of trips and visits contributing to pupils enthusiastically learning about the breadth of cultures within Britain and overseas.

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a good understanding of how to drive whole-school improvement. The school's systems to check pupils' progress are now strong. These are used alongside other procedures to plan effective changes, but the timescales to reach targets are not always precise enough.
- Leaders and managers check the quality of teaching and measure effectively how well staff are meeting their various areas of responsibility. All staff are well supported through training opportunities both within the school and beyond and improvements to the quality of teaching are evident.
- A new management structure came into place in September 2012 and new initiatives are being embedded. A seconded literacy coordinator has undertaken a thorough review of how writing is taught across the school and improvements are beginning to be seen.

- The creative curriculum provides topic work such as 'The Imaginary World' and this is highly motivating for pupils. They develop skills in finding out things for themselves and enjoy using a range of resources including information and communication technology.
- Since the previous inspection there have been improvements to the outdoor area for the Early Years Foundation Stage. There is now a good balance of teacher-led activities and opportunities for children to explore things for themselves both in the classroom and outdoors. The improvements are valued by parents. Consequently, the number of pupils joining the school is growing because of the school's deservedly good reputation among parents.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body are committed to continually driving improvements at this school. They ensure that the school fulfils its statutory responsibilities; all staff have been vetted and trained appropriately to keep pupils safe. They have an accurate overview of overall provision. The governing body works closely with the senior leadership team. Governors challenge staff on pupils' progress and have a secure understanding of data. This level of enquiry and accountability contributes to shaping the short- and long-term plans for the school based on how well pupils are progressing compared to other schools. Governors are aware of the quality of teaching which is linked to teachers' pay based on meeting targets. They are checking that staff make effective use of pupil premium funding to ensure equality of opportunity.

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	112221
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	411809

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	427
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Wright
Headteacher	Kuldip McMullan
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2008
Telephone number	01228 596069
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