

Stanton Community Primary School

Bury Lane, Stanton, Bury St Edmunds, IP31 2DE

Inspection dates 10–11 September 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Teaching and learning are good and sometimes outstanding. There is no inadequate teaching.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Their behaviour in lessons is never less than good and usually excellent, and even when the pace of learning slows they remain eager learners.
- The relatively new curriculum has enthused pupils and teachers alike.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and works well with the deputy headteacher to provide a safe, happy and industrious learning environment.
- The governing body is a real strength. The governors know the school well. They provide well-informed challenge and good strategic direction.
- The school is improving because the senior leadership team and governing body use performance management systems well to improve the quality of teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and not all is good. Sometimes teachers do not make good use of pupils' individual targets for improving their work in lessons. Where teaching requires improvement, the pace of learning is not as fast as it could be.
- At present too few teachers are involved in the leadership and management of the school. This means that too much is being done by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, which sometimes distracts them from their focus on accelerating pupils' progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed eight lessons or part-lessons, seven of which were seen jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of short focused visits to observe teaching.
- Meetings were held with the current and previous school councils, four members of the governing body, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator and other members of staff. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority and a school improvement consultant.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils on the playground and around the school. The team inspector listened to pupils read and talked to them about their books and favourite authors.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) during the inspection and also spoke to parents at the start of the day.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' achievement, documents relating to safeguarding and staff training, and records of governing body meetings and those relating to the performance management of staff. The lead inspector also scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.
- During this inspection, inspectors asked additional questions designed to ascertain the school's view of the impact and effectiveness of local authority services to support school improvement. This information will contribute to work being carried out by Ofsted to assess the use, quality and impact of those services.

Inspection team

Robert Lovett, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Paul Barraclough

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Stanton Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is above average. This is additional funding for specific groups of pupils such as those known to be eligible for free school meals and children in local authority care.
- The proportion of pupils who leave or join partway through their primary school education is higher than average.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with small numbers from a range of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak a first language other than English is low.
- Following the reorganisation of education in Suffolk, the school's first group of Year 5 pupils entered in September 2013. They will move to Year 6 in September 2014, at which time the school will have pupils from ages 3 to 11.
- The school shares the site with a children's centre and pre-school. Neither is run by the governing body, and they were not inspected as part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding and none is less than good by:
 - making more explicit reference to pupils' targets at the start of lessons, so pupils know exactly what they are aiming for
 - ensuring there is always a high level of challenge for the most able pupils
 - developing strategies to ensure that learning always proceeds at a good pace
 - making sure that teachers always focus their attention on what pupils are to learn rather than on what they are to do.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - improving the way leadership roles and accountabilities are distributed throughout the school
 - making better use of the new system for tracking how well pupils are doing to identify possible underachievement and hold teachers fully to account for pupils' progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is not outstanding because the proportions of pupils making good and better progress are not consistently high across subjects and classes.
- Children join the Nursery with differing levels of skills and knowledge, some with poorly developed language and social skills. Most make good progress during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes and enter Year 1 ready to tackle more formal learning.
- In 2012 the proportion of Year 1 pupils achieving at the expected level in the phonics (letters and the sounds they make) screening test was similar to that expected nationally. The most recent screening test for phonics indicates that standards have risen significantly and most pupils are performing above the level expected.
- At the end of Year 2 attainment has been significantly above average overall and in writing in each of the last three years. Attainment in mathematics is above average. The most recent assessments indicate that this is likely to remain the case in 2013, with particularly good gains in reading. The most able pupils have done well, particularly in mathematics.
- The pupils who have just entered Year 5 have made good progress since joining the school, and good progress in Years 3 and 4. Pupils have made the best progress in reading and least in mathematics. Both the most and least able are making good progress. While the proportion of the most able pupils exceeding nationally expected progress is high, some could make better progress still if expectations in lessons were higher. Pupils joining the school during the year settle quickly and rapidly begin to make the same good progress as their classmates.
- A high proportion of pupils are on track to exceed the progress expected nationally for their age by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils supported through the pupil premium have made particularly good progress. Because of the well-targeted support they receive, they often make better progress than their classmates so any gaps in their performance when compared with other pupils in the school are closing rapidly. The most recent published data indicate that on average the attainment of these pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is above that of similar pupils nationally, and better than all pupils nationally.
- Because of the good support they receive, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. The oldest pupils in this group making particularly good progress in reading.
- In most lessons seen during the inspection pupils' progress was good. In all classes observed, relationships were very positive and pupils were eager to learn. When teaching is good or better, pupils learn at a rapid pace because lessons are lively and engaging and work is well matched to their differing ability levels. In these lessons the most able pupils make particularly good progress because they are challenged well. Pupils are encouraged to be resilient and think for themselves.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is usually good across a range of subjects, and in all key stages. It is not outstanding overall because not enough is outstanding and a small amount requires improvement.
- Pupils make the most rapid progress when work is carefully matched to their individual needs and expectations are high. In these lessons teaching proceeds at a good pace. In a mathematics lesson on 'place value' the teacher provided very good support and challenge for the most able pupils by working with them on large numbers and promoting a lively discussion on techniques for dividing five-digit numbers. This is not always the case. In some lessons the challenge for some of the most able pupils is not high enough. Teachers use imaginative illustrations to enliven learning, such as half a Scotch egg to illustrate the structure of the earth in a geography lesson.
- Where teaching is less successful, teachers talk too much about what pupils are to do and not enough about what they are expected to learn. In consequence pupils focus too much on carrying out a task, such as designing a leaflet, and not enough on the quality of the writing it is designed to carry. On other occasions teachers' expectations about the pace at which pupils can work are too low, particularly early on in lessons.
- In an effective physical education session led by a visiting school sports coach, good planning made the progression of skills clear, the coach engaged well with pupils, and everyone (especially the adults) got out of breath. Pupils enjoy physical activities and games, including after-school clubs. They say they would welcome the reintroduction of a football club.
- Teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is typically at least good. There is a good balance between play, learning which children choose for themselves, and teacher-led activities such as counting and the teaching of phonics. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to engage children and make learning fun.
- Marking, which was an area for development at the time of the last inspection, has improved. It is generally detailed and thorough and some is of high quality. The best marking tells pupils how well they have done and what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils make good use of the 'early learning' time at the start of the day to respond to teachers' marking and improve their work. One pupil said this helped him to 'get things right next time'. Targets for improvement are displayed in the front of pupils' books, but they are not routinely referred to at the start of lessons so that pupils know how the work will help them to reach their targets.
- Teachers accurately assess how well pupils read and guide them carefully in their selection of books. Most pupils read for pleasure and talk knowledgeably about the books they enjoy and their favourite authors, with JK Rowling among the favourites. More-able readers read fluently and confidently. Less-able readers say they too like reading, but they do not always use their knowledge of phonics well enough to help them read unfamiliar words.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is almost always exemplary. They are polite, friendly and welcoming. Pupils who are new to the school say they quickly feel part of the community and make friends. At break times older pupils readily play with younger ones and are kind and thoughtful in their dealings with them. Excellent behaviour is the norm, so staff rarely have to resort to specific behaviour management strategies to ensure a calm and purposeful working atmosphere.

- This judgement is endorsed by parents and staff, with almost all saying that pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils are eager to talk about their work and have very positive attitudes to learning. Even when the pace of learning slows, pupils remain eager and attentive. They are very well prepared to take full advantage of outstanding teaching to accelerate their progress. They have enthusiastically embraced recent changes to the curriculum and are delighted that their views on how to learn, and what topics would be most interesting, are taken into account. Pupils in Year 5 are particularly pleased that the school took account of their preference for traditional school desks and different coloured shirts.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They know how to keep themselves safe in a rural environment and are particularly diligent in respect of e-safety. At the start of a lesson in the computer suite a Year 1 pupil reminded the class about the school's rules without any prompting. Bullying and unfriendly behaviour are very rare but pupils are confident that they would be sorted out by staff if any happened. Name-calling of any kind is unusual, and pupils say that name-calling based on race, gender, religion, culture or way of life is not something they have ever heard in school.
- Attendance is above average. The number of persistent absentees is low and there have been no recent exclusions.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership. They have established a caring ethos, where pupils are eager to learn. They enjoy the overwhelming confidence of both staff and parents. However, they have a lot to do in an expanding school. Currently there are too few staff sharing responsibilities and the accountabilities which accompany them. This hampers them in some of the more strategic aspects of their role. They do not use the new pupil tracking system as well as they could to ensure that all pupils are making the best possible progress.
- The school's evaluations of how well it is doing are clear and accurate, resulting in effective improvement planning with a focus on pupils' achievement.
- The school encourages pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, both through the imaginative and stimulating curriculum and through opportunities for the whole school to come together, such as an assembly where all pupils were encouraged to think about doing their very best. Music is a strong and improving element of the curriculum and pupils sing very well. Additional funding for physical education is sustainably used to ensure that staff are able to carry on with the good work of the school sports coach.
- In line with its status as a good school, the school receives limited support from the local authority. The level of support available has reduced in respect of most support services, although the school speaks highly of advice from human resources. Governors say that the quality of their training is good, but its reliability and frequency are not.
- The local authority has successfully shared its strategic view regarding school reorganisation, but the details of the move to primary and secondary education has been largely left to schools to resolve. This has served as a catalyst for school improvement through the development of strong partnerships, where schools share resources and expertise. The school would value greater local authority participation and support.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The previous inspection asked the school to improve the work of the governing body and this has been done. The governing body is now a real strength of the school. Its members are well informed and provide good challenge. They make good use of training opportunities to improve their skills. They have played a significant role in the development of the school into a 3 to 11 primary school. They ensure that all statutory safeguarding requirements are met, and that staff and governor training in child protection is up to date. They have a good focus on how effectively the school is spending its money and the impact it has on pupils' progress and the achievement of those pupils most vulnerable to underachievement, such as those supported by the pupil premium. Governors make good links between measurable targets for pupils' achievement and staff pay.

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	124547
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	425387

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	3–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charlotte Hare
Headteacher	Sue Chapman
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2008
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