

Sturton CofE Primary School

Church Street, Sturton-le-Steeple, Retford, DN22 9HQ

Inspection dates 30–31 October 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		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has improved considerably since its last inspection due to the strong leadership and hard work of the headteacher, teachers and the governing body.
- Standards by Year 6 are above average in reading and writing and are rapidly improving in mathematics.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school. Thanks to leaders' thorough checks on teaching, followed up with effective training, teachers have good subject knowledge and promote learning well.
- Pupils' excellent behaviour makes a very strong contribution to the successful learning in all lessons. Pupils say they feel 'very safe' in school and are aware of the different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, know how to avoid it and what to do should it occur.
- The high quality of care, coupled with good teaching and effective planning, ensures that children of Nursery and Reception age achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage class. Children respond well to the stimulating activities provided and are inquisitive about the world around them.
- Pupils enjoy a good variety of exciting additional activities throughout the school year, usually linked to their current topic focus.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their above-average rates of attendance and punctuality.
- The school accurately evaluates how well it is doing and what needs to be done next in order to improve further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, after a brisk start to the lesson, teachers allow the pace of learning to diminish, thus slowing the rate of progress.
- Standards in mathematics, while improving, are not yet as high as in reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector watched eight lessons, of which four were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions were held with governors, members of staff, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils.
- The inspection took into account the 30 responses to the online questionnaire for parents and carers (Parent View).
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Clive Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most other primary schools. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at school action, school action plus or who have a statement of special education are all below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the overall quality and consistency of teaching by ensuring that teachers ensure lessons proceed at a good pace throughout.
- Improve achievement in mathematics by ensuring that pupils are provided with more opportunities to practise their numeracy and calculation skills in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The good teaching they receive ensures pupils from all backgrounds and abilities make good progress throughout the school. This good progress was reflected in the good quality of learning in lessons observed during the inspection and confirmed by the high standard of work in pupils' books.
- Children's experiences and skills on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage vary from year to year but are generally equivalent to those typically found for this age group. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery/Reception class and make good progress during their first years in school.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, pupils quickly learn the sounds letters make to support their writing. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to build on these good achievements and, by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, attainment in reading and writing is above the national average.
- Achievement has risen rapidly since the last inspection, with progress greatly improved. This is because the quality of teaching has improved considerably. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching across the school ensures that pupils make rapid progress, with a high proportion of pupils in each year group exceeding nationally expected rates of progress for their age. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, attainment in reading and writing is above average and attainment in mathematics is in line with the national average and improving rapidly. The school's data for the current Year 6 pupils show they are doing even better, with a higher proportion of more-able pupils likely to achieve Level 6 in English and mathematics.
- Pupils make particularly good progress in developing their reading skills. This starts by teaching younger pupils to read by linking letters to the sounds that they make (phonics). The teaching of reading, through daily phonics lessons and regular guided reading activities, continues through all age groups. As a result, pupils throughout the school read confidently and well, and older pupils read fluently and with a good understanding of their texts.
- Current standards in mathematics are broadly in line with national averages. Attainment in mathematics has been lagging behind that in English, particularly at the higher levels, but is improving rapidly due to the school's focus on improving both the range of activities provided in mathematics lessons and the way they are taught. Despite this, however, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to practise their calculation skills across the curriculum.
- The small number of pupils eligible for the pupil premium generally make the same good progress as their peers. Their needs are carefully identified and the school uses the funding very well to provide carefully matched additional support, for example, through frequent small-group or one-to-one work. It also allocates extra resources to ensure that these pupils can join in the extra activities made available to all pupils. The small numbers in each year group mean that it is not possible to make meaningful comments about any gaps in their performance relative to their peers.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. The good support provided by class teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies ensures that work is set at the right level for them, enabling them to make small but progressive steps in their learning

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good across the school and sometimes outstanding, and this enables pupils of all backgrounds and abilities to learn successfully. Lessons are well-planned and have clear learning goals that are shared with the pupils. Marking across the school is regular, follows the agreed school format and gives pupils good guidance about how to improve. Good use is made of resources, including technology, to motivate pupils and enhance their learning.
- Teachers plan lessons and subjects with imaginative activities that excite and interest pupils. Good links are made between different subjects and to previous learning. This helps to promote pupils' confidence and enjoyment in learning as well as their spiritual and cultural development.
- In one outstanding literacy lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, focusing on exploring stories from the perspective of different characters, the teacher set a very good pace which was maintained throughout the lesson. Subject vocabulary and key facts were constantly reinforced and activities were changed frequently to maintain pupils' interest. The teacher used questioning skills very effectively to gauge and guide pupils' learning. Challenging tasks, appropriate to pupils' age and ability, motivated and inspired pupils well so that enjoyment and learning, and, hence, behaviour, were outstanding throughout. In another lesson, the skilled teaching of physical education by specialist staff motivated pupils very well so that they enjoyed their lessons and made good progress.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding overall. The best learning occurs when activities are planned to meet the wide range of abilities in each mixed-age class. However, occasionally, teachers allow the pace of learning to slow and remaining unchallenged, frequently following a brisk start to the lesson. This sometimes leads to a reduction in the pace of progress.
- Teachers are well supported by a strong team of teaching assistants, who provide good support for groups and individuals within classrooms and help them build their confidence, and make an effective contribution to the daily phonics activities.
- Strategies for managing the behaviour of pupils are very effective with the result that pupils work in a calm and orderly atmosphere. In the overwhelming majority of lessons, pupils work hard and remain on task without the need for constant adult intervention.
- Teaching and planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in improving and enlarging the Early Years classroom and providing an all-weather access to the spacious and secure outdoor area. Children make good progress in all the required areas of learning.
- Teachers have a clear focus on teaching pupils to read. Regular phonics sessions and guided reading activities for all age groups further support the development of pupils' reading skills and a love of books.
- All pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is checked rigorously and tracked as they move through the school. Termly meetings between the headteacher and individual class teachers about pupils' progress are held to discuss the information gained. These meetings ensure that teachers have a good understanding of how well pupils in their charge are doing and the action they should take to support and help them to reach their challenging targets. Pupils know their individual targets and talk enthusiastically about their challenges: 'I'm a Level 5 but I'm working to get a Level 6', said one.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- From a very early age, pupils behave very well together. Behaviour in class, around the school and in playground areas is outstanding. The school promotes positive relationships and tackles discrimination very effectively. As a result, relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are extremely positive. Pupils cooperate well and contribute eagerly, and this is a major factor in the excellent progress made in many lessons. They respond very well to the many opportunities planned for them to discuss their ideas with other pupils, either with a partner or in small groups.
- An atmosphere of mutual respect pervades the school and this is reflected in the responses to the staff questionnaire, the school's own surveys exploring the views of parents and the views expressed on Parent View.
- Pupils greatly enjoy being in school and are very proud of their school. This is reflected in their improving levels of attendance.
- Pupils are confident that if there is something they cannot sort out themselves, then an adult will be on hand to help. Older pupils readily accept responsibilities such as helping to solve minor disagreements between younger pupils in the playground and operating equipment in assemblies.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying, including any that might be encountered through internet sites. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and say they feel 'very safe' in school. Through membership of the school council they demonstrate their pride in the school community and take their responsibilities very seriously.
- Pupils respond extremely well to the school's excellent promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They have a very clear sense of what is right and wrong.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher has established a consistent focus on significantly improving teaching and accelerating progress across the school. Key strengths and areas for improvement have been identified, with the full support of the governing body.
- The school has been through a prolonged period of significant changes in staffing and is now enjoying the benefits of a much more stable situation. Staff are very well motivated and demonstrate a shared sense of responsibility for, and commitment to, the school's continued improvement.
- Senior leaders are aware of the need for more teaching to be consistently outstanding. They carefully track pupils' progress and the quality of teaching, and use this information to ensure that planning for improvement is founded on good evidence and accurate data.
- The school thoroughly evaluates its performance and ensures its action plan carefully matches its choice of priorities to the school's identified needs. Effective leadership ensures that actions have a clear impact on progress and teaching and has led to a much-improved and improving school which has good capacity to move forward.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very effectively. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity in all its work is good. Leaders are constantly alert to any

variation in achievement and searching for new ways to overcome any weaknesses.

- Fully supported and monitored by the governing body, the school makes effective use of the money derived from the pupil premium to support frequent small-group and one-to-one work. This helps to ensure that the small group of eligible pupils make good progress in their time in school.
- The school provides high-quality care for its pupils. The small size of the school ensures that families and pupils are known very well by staff. The school's extremely positive relationships with parents and carers, the overwhelming majority of whom would recommend the school to others, and the very good links with a range of partners such as the behaviour support team, speech therapy services and family support services, contribute significantly to improvements in pupils' well-being and achievement.
- Staff ensure that pupils benefit from a good balance of interesting and exciting activities. These include visits, visitors to the school and residential stays from Year 3 upwards. The recent strong focus on supporting literacy and mathematics across the school, tied in with a revised programme of topics with imaginative links developed between different subjects, has had a positive effect on pupils' progress, enthusiasm and ability to learn and work on their own. However, despite these improvements, pupils do not currently have enough opportunities to apply and consolidate the skills they learn in mathematics lessons in other subjects.
- Although at the time of inspection, the school had yet to receive its primary sport funding, the school was providing all pupils with weekly physical education lessons led by skilled sports trainers. Systems are fully in place for the evaluation of the provision at a future date.
- The local authority has been helpful in supporting the school to improve since the last inspection. It has arranged training for both governors and leaders and assisted the school in checking that they are accurate in their measurement of standards.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body provides strong support and challenge for leaders and managers in order to ensure that the school continues to improve and move forward. Governors gather, check and discuss a wide range of reports about the school as well as visiting regularly to see for themselves how the school is operating and being led. As a result, they have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Governors are rigorous in checking that safeguarding systems are secure and that they meet all current regulatory requirements. The governing body has been effective in overseeing the arrangements for relating teachers' pay to performance. Governors play a fully active role in the school's self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement planning processes. They understand the data on how well pupils do, and the comparative performance of the school in relation to schools nationally. Governors ask probing questions and know what is happening in the school. They are aware that provision is currently good and are ambitious for the school to become outstanding.

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	122808
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	425036

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Select
School category	Select
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Evans
Headteacher	Mark Elliott
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2012
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