

Stilton CofE VC Primary School

Church Street, Stilton, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE7 3RF

Inspection dates

28–29 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Inadequate
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Inadequate
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Leadership has been ineffective in preventing the decline in standards and progress.
- Leaders and governors are not demonstrating the capacity to improve outcomes for pupils.
- The many changes in staffing are slowing improvement.
- Pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is too slow.
- The school is over-optimistic in its self-evaluation. Plans for improvement are detailed, but actions to address weaknesses have lacked urgency and effectiveness.
- Teaching fails to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. The most able pupils underachieve in writing, mathematics, science and topic work.
- Governors have not held leaders sufficiently to account for pupils' progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged do not receive the support they need to make good progress from their starting points. Leadership of this area is weak.
- Key stage and subject leaders do not evaluate the progress of all groups of pupils well enough to ensure that they are making rapid progress.
- The new leadership in the early years is showing some signs of success but teaching is not yet consistently effective. Some children do not make the progress of which they are capable.

The school has the following strengths

- The school's strong values, staff's commitment and pupils' good behaviour, contribute to a safe and harmonious school community.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- In some subjects and year groups teaching is effective.
- Staff work well together to maintain a strong safeguarding culture across the school.
- Attendance is above average.

Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - securing the permanent senior leadership of the school
 - ensuring the effective leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - ensuring additional funding is used to ensure that pupils who are disadvantaged make better progress, and evaluating the impact of this expenditure
 - training key stage and subject leaders so that they make a demonstrable difference in their areas of responsibilities
 - making sure that checks on teaching, including in the early years, lead to improvements in the quality of teaching
 - training teaching assistants and deploying them effectively
 - providing the governing body with more detailed information about the achievement of groups of pupils so that governors can hold leaders to account for the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes.

- Accelerate pupils' progress in all subjects, especially in writing and mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that teachers meet the requirements of the national curriculum for the teaching of mathematics
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing and numeracy skills across subjects of the curriculum
 - assessing pupils' learning rigorously to check progress and quickly support those who are at risk of falling behind
 - providing the most able pupils with more appealing and challenging activities.

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good by ensuring that:
 - external support is timely and planned tightly to influence practice in the classroom
 - teachers have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve
 - teachers use assessment information well to meet the needs of pupils
 - all teachers make more effective use of additional adults to support the learning and progress of identified pupils
 - effective teaching strategies are shared to improve teaching across the school.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Over the past three years, leaders and governors have been too slow to halt the decline in standards.
- On arrival at the school in September 2015, the interim headteacher discovered a more challenging situation than expected. In her first year as substantive headteacher she has made a positive start and introduced a range of measures, some more effective than others. She successfully rallied the staff and set out to improve the quality of teaching and learning with the support of the experienced deputy headteacher.
- There are signs of success in some areas, such as in the accuracy of teachers' assessment and in raising the profile and importance of reading. However, most other improvements are at an early stage and are still unproven.
- The external support to improve the quality of leadership and teaching has had limited impact. The full package of support, agreed with a teaching school, has not been provided because local leaders of education were not available. As a result, teachers have not received sufficiently precise coaching. The review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding, due in July 2017 and agreed with the teaching school, was cancelled during this inspection.
- Despite the external monitoring and the support of advisers from the local authority and the Diocese of Ely, subject leaders have not had either the time or skills to improve significantly the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The external support lacked balance, with too much concerned with monitoring and too little actually directed to improving practice in the classroom. Leaders did not follow through the implementation of the advice sufficiently well.
- The school improvement plan and targets to manage the performance of staff have been ineffective in bringing about the rapid improvements needed. Checks on teaching and learning are conducted frequently, but do not focus enough on the outcomes of pupils from specific groups such as those who are most able and those who are disadvantaged. Leaders have not suitably evaluated the use of the extra funding to support these pupils, or analysed its impact on their attainment and progress.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is weak. The coordinator does not routinely identify teachers' training needs. Strategies or targets to help pupils are vague and the coordinator does not fine tune sufficiently frequently the support that pupils receive, despite the obvious gaps in their learning. Over time, leaders have not reviewed the use of additional funding quickly enough to check that it was making a discernible difference to pupils' progress.
- The effectiveness of the work of teaching assistants and its impact on pupils' progress have not been carefully evaluated. Several parents raised concerns over the lack of support for their children. This poor provision, including the lack of strategies to meet the needs of the most able pupils, puts in question the school's stated commitment to promote equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Subject and key stage leaders are not being held to account well enough for their

areas of responsibility. The action plans, scrutinised by inspectors, are detailed and show a strong focus on planning and resourcing. However, these plans are not recording the weaknesses in teaching with sufficient clarity or indicating how learning will be improved.

- The new leadership of early years is improving provision and children's outcomes. The early years leader knows what further work is required to improve teaching and learning.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a range of learning opportunities within and beyond the school day. The pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is supported well by the themes studied. Most enrichment activities, alongside the effective links with the local community and the church, broaden pupils' understanding of the world they live in and of their role as British citizens. However, the balance of time given to subjects and the way classes are reorganised in mixed-age groups in the afternoon are not helping pupils to deepen their understanding.
- The physical education and sports funding for primary schools is used well to develop teachers' skills and to provide a wide range of sporting opportunities in the physical education (PE) lessons and after school. This has led to high participation and success in sporting competitions. Pupils are helped to understand how to keep fit and healthy. Displays and assemblies proudly celebrate pupils' achievements.

Governance of the school

- Governors were surprised by the severity of these inspection's findings. This is because the school's self-evaluation was over-optimistic and inspectors found deeper weaknesses than leaders had identified.
- The many changes to staffing due in September 2017, some in key senior leadership roles, are increasing the risk of the school's standards slipping even further. At present, the capacity of the school to improve is limited.
- Governors have not checked carefully enough that the use of additional funding has improved the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged.
- Governors have started to receive more accurate performance information and are now aware of the decline in standards. They commissioned a review of governance in March 2017 and this is giving them a clear agenda for improvement.
- Governors are very committed and want the best for all pupils in the school. They are keen to fulfil their responsibilities with regard to providing robust challenge and are developing a strategic direction for the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The headteacher, who is the designated lead for safeguarding, keeps accurate and detailed records of any pupil who may be at risk of harm. Staff know their duties well because leaders have ensured that all adults receive up-to-date training. Staff are clear about when and how they should report concerns. They have been trained to identify

signs that a pupil may be exposed to radicalisation or other forms of abuse.

- The headteacher, ably supported by the family link worker, provided very good examples of how pupils' safety is monitored, including when pupils are at risk of going missing.
- Leaders and governors carry out all the proper checks on adults at recruitment and keep an accurate central record of this vetting, as required.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- The impact of teaching and assessment on pupils' learning is inadequate. The standards pupils reach based on their starting points are too low. A significant number of pupils who responded to the Ofsted survey are not positive about the support they receive to help them learn. A third said that the work they do is not challenging.
- A legacy of weak teaching and the many staff changes have resulted in pupils needing intensive support to fill gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Despite some training and senior leaders' frequent monitoring, teaching is not accelerating progress for all pupils, including pupils who are most able, those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- All classes have additional adults who support the class teacher. Teaching assistants are highly committed and meet pupils' emotional needs well. However, the support is not focused enough on identifying barriers to learning and reinforcing specific vocabulary and skills. Targets for pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are vague. The impact of additional support is not demonstrated and pupils progress far too slowly within their year group. Across the key stages, pupils underachieve, especially at key stage 1.
- Until the recent past, assessment has not been accurate enough to provide meaningful performance information. Teachers are meeting with colleagues from local schools to check that their judgements of pupils' progress are accurate. Although becoming more aware of current performance, teachers do not match activities to pupils' precise learning needs in order to meet the higher expectation of the national curriculum and end of key stage targets.
- Training for staff has focused on developing the necessary subject knowledge to improve pupils' progress. Staff have worked with local authority advisers and visited outstanding or good schools, but have been unable to apply or sustain effective practice across year groups.
- The teaching of mathematics and writing is not good enough. Subject leaders do not check how well pupils are applying their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. Misconceptions are not challenged promptly.
- Phonics is taught systematically from the early years onwards, but the impact of effective phonics teaching is not yet evident. Not enough key stage 1 pupils, especially in Year 2, are proficient in applying their knowledge to read and write unfamiliar words and sentences of sufficient complexity. The practice of sending Year 1 pupils to the Reception class to work on their phonics is poorly managed.
- Leaders have been successful in promoting the importance of reading. The book corners in each classroom encourage pupils to read for pleasure. Parents commented

on effective initiatives, such as the 'Reading Rocket', and they say that they are encouraged to hear their children read at home. The refurbished and welcoming library is being gradually stocked with a broad range of fiction and non-fiction books. Leaders acknowledge that better texts are required to raise standards and develop pupils' love of reading, especially for older pupils who are fluent readers.

- There is some effective teaching in specific classes that captures pupils' interest and accelerates their learning. In these classes, subject knowledge is strong and teachers use questioning well to probe pupils' understanding and encourage them to explain why they chose a particular way to write a story or solve their mathematical problems. Staff then use pupils' responses to adapt their teaching. As a result, pupils, regardless of their ability, make rapid gains with their learning. This good practice is not shared sufficiently across the school.
- Teaching in the early years is not yet consistently good but it is improving. Several features are particularly effective, such as the targeting of additional support, the use of the outdoor space and the well-organised resources that support children's learning and personal development. The new leader knows what to do to remedy the weaknesses in teaching so that all children are better prepared for their learning in Year 1.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- In contrast to other aspects of the school's work, promoting pupils' good personal development and welfare is a success. Staff, pupils and parents work together to celebrate and promote the 'Stilton Spirit'. The school's strong values are embedded in the daily life of the school.
- The motto of 'Live Together - Learn Together - Grow Together', and the many celebrations of pupils' achievement, encourage pupils to behave well and to respect the views of others. Pupils are nurtured and cared for well. Almost all parents are positive about these aspects of the school's work.
- Although pupils' personal development is good and pupils are generally keen to work hard, they rarely ask questions to further their understanding, often because they are not given the opportunity to do so. In addition, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities rely heavily on the support of additional adults. These pupils are not sufficiently self-assured learners.
- Pupils concentrate on their activities in class, even when they complete their work quickly because teaching is less demanding than it could be. They take pride in the work that they produce. For example, children in the early years were keen to show the inspector how well they could shape their letters and numbers.
- Some aspects of the curriculum stimulate pupils' interest and are successful in developing their confidence. The experience of singing at the Albert Hall, opportunities for educational and residential visits, and the PE and art curriculum develop pupils' self-

esteem, team work, creative and organisational skills.

- Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and are very tolerant of differences. They can clearly articulate what fairness means to them. The range of extra-curricular sport and high levels of participation help pupils increase their physical health and learn about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle.
- Pupils enjoy the opportunity to take responsibility, such as organising the 'Stilton's Got Talent' event, being play leaders or acting on the messages found in the bully-buster box. They are cooperative and supportive of each other. They say that they like this small school because everyone 'gets on well with each other' and that 'bullying is dealt with quickly'. They feel safe at school.
- Staff have received relevant training and follow correct procedures in response to concerns they may have about individual pupils. Pupils understand how to stay safe, including when using the internet. They were observed behaving very safely.
- Displays around the school show pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example, in learning about different faiths, taking part in safer-internet days and participating in charity events. Their role as good citizens is well evidenced as they join their parents to raise money for the school and get involved in the local community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is a calm and orderly environment. In the early years, children quickly learn about the school's routines. Older pupils were observed behaving very well on the school's playground and in the dining hall.
- Pupils are aware of different types of bullying and incidents are rare. Pupils say that they have no hesitation telling an adult if they need help. A very small number of parents who met the inspectors, or provided additional comments to the lead inspector, are concerned about a few cases of bullying. Inspectors found that bullying incidents are investigated thoroughly.
- There is little challenging behaviour at the school. Pupils who have emotional needs receive the help they need so that the learning of the whole class is not affected. The family link worker liaises with parents to offer additional support.
- Pupils listen attentively to adults and to each other. However, where teaching is uninteresting, pupils tend to relax their concentration. Pupils who responded to the survey said that behaviour is sometimes not so good in lessons. Nonetheless, when an adult reminds pupils of the expectations, they soon get back on track.
- Pupils want to attend school and attendance is above average. The school is working hard with the few families who struggle to maintain their children's good attendance and punctuality at school.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Progress is slow in a range of subjects and across key stages. Standards have fallen

since the school was previously inspected.

- Progress in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 2 was well below the national average in 2016, with reading and mathematics in the bottom 10% of schools nationally. The school's own assessment information confirms that the rates of progress for current pupils remain too slow to enable pupils to catch up quickly.
- By the end of key stage 1, in 2016, pupils did not make enough progress from their starting points in reading and writing. Progress was better in mathematics.
- Outcomes in phonics at the end of Year 1 have been below the national average for the past three years. By the end of Year 2, pupils have not caught up and the proportion meeting the standard is still below the national average. Phonics assessment information for the current Year 1 and Year 2 show that pupils are not on track to meet the standard expected.
- Subject leaders have not, in the past, focused precisely on pupils' starting points to accelerate progress and raise attainment. Better tracking and analysis of the achievement of different groups of pupils started this year, but it is too early to see whether this will make a difference to pupils' standards. The precise monitoring of outcomes in subjects other than English and mathematics is underdeveloped.
- The information that class teachers receive about pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is unclear. The plans and targets are not ensuring that pupils make sufficient progress. Many parents are concerned that their children's additional needs are not met. They also find that communication about academic progress is too infrequent. The findings from this inspection support the views of parents.
- The most able pupils are not making enough progress. This is because teachers are not challenging them sufficiently, and expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Inspectors scrutinised work in a wide range of subjects and found that the most able pupils are rarely given tasks at a higher level to practise their skills, such as investigations in science or creative writing in topic work. Too few pupils are working at greater depth.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged are not catching up with their peers. Their progress is too slow because the pupil premium funding is not being used well enough to provide targeted support to meet their needs.
- The rate of progress for children in the Reception class and pupils in the Year 3 and Year 4 classes is improving. Pupils in Year 4 do well in their morning sessions. However, the practice of splitting the Year 4 class in the afternoon, with pupils joining other year groups, is not effective. The rationale for this re-grouping is based on lack of staffing more than a sound educational reason to improve learning. Parents do not approve of this strategy and it is not planned to continue from September 2017.
- In some subjects, other than English, mathematics and science, pupils do well. For example, in PE pupils take part in a range of competitive sports and achieve well. There are some good displays in school showing good progress in the creative arts and computing. In the Reception class children were proud to show the inspector their

good knowledge as they answered the morning register in French. In some topic work, however, evidence of good or outstanding outcomes is limited.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- In 2016, only just over half of all children achieved a good level of development by the end of Reception. This was well below the national average, and too many children were not prepared well for work in Year 1.
- Almost all children have experience of pre-school education and most have starting points that are typical for their age. Some enter with skills beyond what is typical. A few children have some difficulty in communication and language. The proportion of current children achieving a good level of development improved significantly this year. It is set to rise to be close to the national average.
- Early years provision is better than other aspects of school because new leadership is raising expectations of staff, children and parents. Teaching is becoming more effective and outcomes for current children are improving. The new leader is responding well to the support of the local authority adviser. Capacity to sustain improvement is strong.
- Some aspects of teaching are not consistently good. Activities are planned to meet the needs of most children but challenge for those who are most able is lacking. The balance between children choosing their own work and being directed by adults is not quite right. For example, in one session, none of the children chose the writing activities, especially boys, and they were not guided promptly enough towards them. Opportunities were missed to develop this important skill.
- The use of assessment information to set specific targets for children and to inform parents more precisely of their children's progress, requires some consolidation. The new leader is providing helpful training and support to develop staff's professional skills and this is improving current provision. There are clear plans to develop the quality of teaching and assessment further.
- Staff model spoken language well and this supports children's vocabulary development when they work alongside an adult. The teaching of phonics is systematic, and adults help children to identify letters and to repeat sounds carefully. The teaching of numbers is given emphasis and adults expertly rehearse counting practice in routine activities. During this inspection, the teaching assistant was using very effective strategies to develop children's understanding of number using the outdoor area.
- Children have good attitudes to learning and enjoy the activities and interactions with staff. The outdoor space offers a range of opportunities for learning and development. One group was observed thoroughly enjoying working with water. The arrival of the new mud kitchen is really exciting. Children are eager to see it fully installed so that they can use it.
- Children in Reception have a happy and positive experience. Their personal, social and emotional development is good because staff provide a high level of care to each child. Children know the school's routines. They quickly learn how to work alongside each other, learn how to share resources and toys and spontaneously line up before play.

- Children's statutory welfare, safeguarding and safety needs are met fully.
- Partnership with parents begins before children start school and involves visits to the school and information meetings. The parents who spoke to the inspectors appreciate the opportunity to talk to staff at the beginning and end of the day. Parents say that staff deal well with the needs of their children, including those with medical conditions. Parents appreciate the advice from school on how to support learning at home.

School details

Unique reference number	110821
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10031471

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Springford
Headteacher	Charlotte MacLeod
Telephone number	01733240480
Website	www.stiltonprimary.co.uk
Email address	head@stilton.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 July 2013

Information about this school

- Stilton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- It has one Reception class and one class for each year group.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of those supported through an education, health and care plan (EHCP) or a statement of special educational needs is average.
- There have been many changes in staffing since the previous inspection. Over a third of teachers joined the school in the past three years. The current headteacher was the school's interim headteacher for the 2015/16 academic year and became the substantive headteacher in September 2016. She resigned in May 2017 and is due to leave the school in July 2017. Temporary leadership is in place for the autumn term

2017.

- In September 2016 the local authority issued the school with a warning notice because of low standards.
- The local authority arranged for a teaching school to coach teachers at the school to improve teaching and learning. The local authority monitored and evaluated the school's progress. The adviser from the Diocese of Ely offered additional support.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Several sessions were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Throughout the two days of the inspection, inspectors spoke with pupils, individually and in groups, about their learning and safety.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading. They reviewed pupils' work in lessons and analysed samples of work in books, on display in classrooms and around the school.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the governing body, the vice-chair and four other governors.
- Two phone calls were made to the local authority during the inspection.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, key stage and subject leaders and other staff, including the coordinator for special educational needs and the family link worker.
- Inspectors looked at the school's review of its own performance, its development plan, a number of key school policies and the minutes of governing body meetings. They considered a range of documentation in relation to child protection, safeguarding, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors analysed 49 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View. An additional 27 comments, including one detailed letter, were sent to the lead inspector.
- There were 15 staff who completed the Ofsted staff questionnaire and 41 pupils completed the Ofsted pupils' survey.

Inspection team

Marianick Ellender-Gelé, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jane Dooley	Ofsted Inspector
Heather Hann	Ofsted Inspector

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