



St Stephen's Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109046
LEA South Gloucestershire
Inspection number 278109
Inspection dates 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005
Reporting inspector David Westall RISP

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Type of school | Infant | School address | Lansdown Road |
| School category | Community | | Kingswood |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 | | Bristol BS15 1XD |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01454 866 470 |
| Number on roll | 247 | Fax number | 01454 866 470 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | |
| Date of previous inspection | 11 December 2000 | Headteacher | Mr Tim Ruck |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two inspectors.

Description of the school

St Stephen's Infant School is an average sized school on the outskirts of Bristol. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average, as is the percentage of pupils identified as having learning difficulties (special educational needs). There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. There have been a significant number of staff changes over the last two years, and there is currently an acting headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which provides sound value for money. The school considers that it is providing a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils, and the inspectors agree. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and enables pupils to make sound progress. As a result, standards are broadly average in Year 2. However, pupils could do better if the teaching was more consistently good, and this is recognised by the school. Children have a satisfactory range of learning experiences in the Reception classes. They make sound progress and most reach the standard expected at the end of the Foundation Stage. Assessment procedures are sound in English and mathematics but the recently introduced systems in other subjects are not securely established.

Pupils enjoy school, behave well and develop positive relationships. Their personal development is fostered well, and the school is a caring community where everyone matters. However, a very recent resignation means that there is currently no member of staff who has been trained in child protection procedures. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, and there is a well focused improvement plan to guide the school's development. However, procedures for checking and improving teaching and learning are underdeveloped in some subjects. The school's improvement since the last inspection is adequate and has been impaired by recent staff changes. The school is now in a sound position to move forward.

Grade: 3

What the school should do to improve further

- increase the amount of good teaching, by ensuring that all lessons move at a good pace and that the most capable pupils are sufficiently challenged
- rectify the inadequate monitoring procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics by developing the roles of co-ordinators
- ensure that assessment procedures, recently introduced in subjects other than English and mathematics, are securely established
- ensure that child protection training takes place rapidly for at least one member of staff.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards meet the school's reasonable expectations in Year 2 and are broadly in line with the national average.

Most children enter the school with average standards. They make sound progress in the Reception classes and generally reach the nationally expected standards in all areas of learning at the end of the Foundation Stage.

In 2004, the results of the statutory tests in Year 2 were not significantly different from the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although these

standards reflected pupils' satisfactory overall achievement, fewer pupils reached standards that were above the minimum expected level in writing than in 2003. The school consequently identified writing as an area for improvement. At present, there are no national figures for comparison with the school's results in Year 2 in 2005. However, the percentage of pupils exceeding the minimum expected standard in writing rose at the school, reflecting the increased emphasis on this key skill.

Pupils with learning difficulties make sound overall progress. They often do particularly well when taught in very small groups by teaching assistants who target their needs accurately. The achievement of the most capable pupils is adequate. However, these pupils sometimes mark time in lessons because their work is too easy.

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is good. However, the concentration of some pupils understandably wanes when they are occasionally required to sit and listen to their teachers for too long. Pupils like and respect their teachers and it is clear that these feelings are reciprocated. As a result, pupils feel valued and secure, and know that teachers have their best interests at heart. Attendance is satisfactory.

Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils appreciate the wonder of the natural world, respect the ideas of others, understand the difference between right and wrong and begin to recognise the richness and diversity of other cultures. They work well together in shared tasks during lessons and they co-operate amicably and constructively with their classmates. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, for example, as school councillors or as 'friendship buddies' for those who might need support during lunchtimes.

Good school initiatives, including 'fruit tuck' at break times, a lunchtime salad bar and the promotion of physical activities, ensure that pupils recognise the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, and this reflects the school's own view. As a consequence, pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. Teachers' planning is sound, and they know exactly what they expect pupils to learn. Explanations are clear and it is rare for pupils to be confused about how to tackle their work. Teaching assistants are well briefed and they support pupils well, especially those with learning difficulties. In the most effective lessons, teachers make good use of questions to probe pupils' understanding and to challenge their thinking. In these lessons, pupils'

interest is captured and maintained well, and they make good progress. In the weaker lessons, the pace is slower, tasks are rather dull and the most capable pupils sometimes mark time. There is sometimes too much teacher talk and too little pupil activity, and opportunities for pupils to use their initiative are rare.

Assessment procedures are sound for Reception children and in the key subjects of English and mathematics. However, the satisfactory procedures that have been recently introduced in other subjects are not securely established. Teachers' marking has improved since the last inspection and now helps pupils to recognise their achievements and to know how to improve.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Curricular provision is satisfactory. All pupils benefit from a range of worthwhile learning opportunities, and statutory requirements are met. However, in the Reception classes too much time is sometimes spent on teacher directed activities, which limits opportunities for pupils to make choices and to learn through purposeful play. Teachers make sound use of national and local guidance, and plan in year group teams to ensure a consistent approach. Ample attention is given to the development of pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy, and a strong emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills.

A good range of visitors to the school enhances pupils' learning. In addition, regular theme days, or weeks, are used effectively to celebrate different aspects of the curriculum.

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school evaluates the quality of care, guidance and support as good, and inspectors agree. All staff show that they care for pupils and value their efforts. Consequently, pupils say that they feel well looked after and secure, and that it is easy to talk to staff if they have any problems. The school works effectively with parents and external agencies when children need extra help.

There is a comprehensive health and safety policy, and regular site inspections are undertaken to check for potential hazards. All staff have received training in first aid and there are clear procedures for dealing with relevant medical conditions. Pupils are made aware of the dangers of smoking and, where appropriate, the misuse of drugs.

Despite the good overall provision for pupils' care, guidance and support, a recent staff resignation has left the school without a teacher trained in child protection procedures. This situation is unsatisfactory, although there are well advanced plans to rectify this deficiency.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The acting headteacher is providing sound leadership in his temporary role, prior to the appointment of a permanent headteacher. He has worked constructively with other members of the senior management team to agree sensible priorities for the school, for example, to enhance the quality of teaching and to increase the rigour of monitoring procedures in a range of subjects. These have been presented in a well organised improvement plan which provides a clear direction for the school. A common sense of purpose among staff is being promoted, and teamwork is increasing. The school is in a sound position to improve further.

The school's self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory. While there are some areas for improvement, the acting headteacher and the senior management team have a balanced and realistic view of the school's current performance and future needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages provision efficiently and ensures that extra help is well targeted for these pupils. Monitoring procedures are securely established in English, and well focused advice from the co-ordinator has helped teachers to raise standards in writing in the last academic year. In mathematics, the rigour of monitoring has recently improved, and all teachers have received useful feedback following lesson observations. However, in other subjects, monitoring and evaluation procedures are underdeveloped. Consequently, most co-ordinators are in weak positions to target areas for improvement accurately.

The governors provide sound support for the school. Financial planning is good, and the governors have a satisfactory awareness of the school's overall strengths and weaknesses.

Grade: 3

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Inspection judgements

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall | 16-19 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 3 | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | 3 | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 | NA |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | Yes | NA |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | NA |

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 3 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 | NA |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 | NA |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 | NA |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 | NA |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 | NA |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 3 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 3 | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | Yes | NA |

| | |
|---|-----|
| The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy | |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health | NA |
| The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe | |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them | Yes |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution | |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form | NA |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy | NA |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

30th September 2005

Dear Children,

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so friendly, polite and helpful. This is what we found out:

you enjoy learning and behave well

the staff are good at making sure that you understand how important it is to listen to other people's ideas and to be kind to each other

the staff take good care of you, and you know who to go to if you want some help

we were pleased that you understand how important it is to eat healthy food, and we noticed how much you enjoyed eating fruit and raw vegetables at lunch and playtimes

your work is about as good as children's work in most infant schools, and shows that the teachers are making sure that you are doing alright.

To make the school even better, we have asked the headteacher and governors to make sure that you don't have to sit for so long in some lessons before you start work, and that teachers don't give some of you work that is too easy. We would also like the teachers to check, more carefully, how you are getting on in some subjects like science, art, design technology, history and geography.

Thank you again for your help.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely,

David Westall Lead inspector