



Stowford Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113330
LEA Devon
Inspection number 279144
Inspection dates 2 May 2006 to 3 May 2006
Reporting inspector Laurie Lewin AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Exeter Road
School category	Community		Ivybridge
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Devon PL21 0BG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01752 894163
Number on roll	402	Fax number	01752 893934
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr P Wycliffe-Jones
Date of previous inspection	8 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs H Tipping

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	2 May 2006 - 3 May 2006	279144

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large school. Nearly all pupils are White British, with a very small number coming from other cultural backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language but do not need any support. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average but has been increasing in recent years. Similarly, although below average, the proportion of pupils eligible to receive free school meals has been increasing in recent years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Strong leadership and management have enabled a good pace of improvement to be sustained since the last inspection. The dynamic approach of the new headteacher has provided a fresh and invigorating atmosphere in the school. Good quality, well-focused action plans alongside good teamwork by the staff ensure that the school is very well placed to continue improving. Strong provision in the Foundation Stage helps children to progress well and achieve good standards. Similarly, good teaching ensures pupils progress well across the rest of the school, so that high standards are attained by the end of Year 6, with exceptionally good performance by pupils in reading. The provision of a well-enriched curriculum provides a strong boost to pupils' learning, though planning in English needs improvement. The school has rightly identified standards in writing as being weaker than other areas and has a range of good initiatives in place to address this. Much good work has been done to strengthen systems for assessing pupils' progress. However, teachers do not make enough use of information about pupils' progress to provide individuals with sharply focused performance targets. The accuracy of the school's self-evaluation is spot on and means that staff and governors all share a clear view about strengths and weaknesses and the ways forward to address these. Good systems to support, guide and care for pupils result in them showing very good behaviour and attitudes. Parents have a high regard for the school. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make greater use of assessment information to provide clear and precise targets for pupils' achievement.
- Develop planning systems for English which ensure that teachers adopt a consistent approach towards improving pupils' writing skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. They start school attaining standards that broadly match the expected levels, but with communication, language and literacy and mathematical skills that are below the levels expected at this age. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, by the end of which they attain above-average standards. Work in lessons and in pupils' books seen during the inspection confirms that this good progress is sustained throughout the rest of the school. As a result, pupils reach above-average standards by the age of seven. They attain well-above-average standards overall by the age of eleven, with exceptionally high standards reached in reading. Standards in writing are not as good as in other areas. While pupils mainly learn to write accurately and present their work neatly, too few of them write with the flair and imagination of which they are capable. The school has improved its provision for supporting lower-attaining pupils and those who have learning difficulties or disabilities, and these pupils now achieve well. The school sets challenging targets for pupils' performance in Year 6 national tests and is successful in achieving these. Pupils do

well in sports activities and some examples of good quality painting, drawing and model making are seen around the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They have very positive attitudes and enjoy school. They told inspectors, 'It's fun being at this school ... especially with all of the extra sports you get to do!' Attendance is satisfactory. The school is working well to further reduce absences caused by the number of family holidays taken in term-time. Behaviour is very good in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite and very friendly.

Pupils feel safe and secure in school and talks from a wide range of experts such as the police, fire officers and the RNLI very effectively promote their understanding of safety. The pupils' regular participation in local town festivals and the current initiative to gain the national 'ECO School' award are good examples of the effective ways in which the school helps pupils learn the value of contributing to the community and protecting the environment. Handling small budgets in their charity fundraising work and links made to local businesses help pupils gain a keen insight into methods of promoting their own future economic well-being. Pupils spoken to showed an impressive understanding of what they need to do to ensure that they keep fit and stay healthy. This understanding is enhanced well through the full programme of sports and the daily 10-minute physical activity sessions.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. While their moral and social awareness is well developed, only limited planned opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on the world around them or to promote a wider understanding of life in other cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are generally well planned to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities, including individuals who have learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils like their teachers and say, 'They are calm and nice and give you lots of encouragement'. Teachers give pupils a clear idea of what they are expected to learn and, as a result, pupils concentrate and try hard to complete the tasks they are given. Pupils usually progress well because of the good pace of work and challenging tasks provided. Teachers use resources well, such as the new interactive whiteboards, to present ideas in an interesting way and to motivate the pupils. Teaching assistants are well briefed and are used effectively to support different groups of pupils and encourage individuals with specific learning needs. The school has rightly identified the need to improve the planning of work in English to ensure that pupils build on their writing skills in a consistent way as they move through the school. Good work has been done over the last year to implement new systems to assess and track pupils'

progress. However, teachers are not yet making full enough use of the information gained to increase the precision of the targets set to improve each pupil's work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. The well-planned provision in the Foundation Stage helps children to make a good start to their school life and progress well. Throughout the school, teachers take a lot of trouble to plan a wide-ranging and interesting work programme. Pupils' studies are well enriched by visits made and visitors coming into the school. There is an exceptionally good range of educational outings and extra-curricular activities, which pupils support with enthusiasm. A strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' sports skills and encouraging them to develop healthy and safe lifestyles. Although subjects are often suitably linked, not enough opportunities are provided to extend writing and literacy skills across the curriculum. The school has recently strengthened its provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities so that these individuals are now well supported and make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is good. Good pastoral care means pupils are confident to talk to adults about any concerns. Child protection procedures are good, and staff are alert to signs that any pupil might be upset or worried.

Staff adopt a thorough approach to ensuring that pupils work in a safe and secure environment. The school is good at helping pupils develop a 'stay safe' mentality through, for example, the provision of a Junior Life Skills training course provided by the emergency services. Pupils are well guided and supported in developing healthy eating and physical activity regimes.

Although teachers give pupils targets, discussions with pupils and staff indicate that this process is not yet sufficiently well developed to give pupils a full and clear understanding of how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. As a result, the school has improved at a good rate and maintained a consistent track record of helping pupils to achieve well and reach high standards. The new headteacher leads with enthusiasm and skill. Her dynamic approach is supported most effectively by members of the new strategic leadership team and other staff. The school has rightly identified the need to continue developing the roles of all staff with posts of responsibilities, as a means of further strengthening leadership and management. There is good communication and teamwork, together with a clear and shared focus on tackling new initiatives. High quality self-evaluation

of performance means that staff and governors fully understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. All of these strengths, coupled with very effective development action plans, mean that the school is well placed to sustain improvement in the future.

Governors work well. They visit the school regularly and are active in monitoring the financial position and the overall progress of the school improvement plan. They readily exercise their role as critical friends.

School leaders have built strong links with a range of organisations such as pre-school bodies, the college, the church and local community groups to tap into all potential for enhancing the quality of education provided.

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
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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	3	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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	Yes
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

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed coming to visit your school. Thank you for making us so welcome and helping us during the school inspection. We especially enjoyed hearing about the activities you said you enjoyed. We were impressed by the things we saw and here are some of them:

- You work very hard in lessons and show a lot of interest in the work.
- You reach high standards in English, mathematics and science by the time you are in Year 6.
- Everybody in your school is very friendly and polite and your behaviour is very good.
- You like your teachers and you told us that they work really hard to make lessons interesting and fun. We also think the teachers do a good job.
- You really appreciate all of the extra, interesting activities that the school provides for you.
- We think the school is good at taking care of you.
- We were impressed to see how knowledgeable you are about the need to eat healthy foods and stay fit.
- We think that your headteacher does an excellent job of organising the school, helping everybody to work together.

To make things even better in the future, we think the school needs to help you become as good at writing as you are at other aspects of your work. Also, we feel that teachers should make more use of the information they have about your progress to create clearer targets to show you how to improve your work.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.