



Stafford Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114469
LEA East Sussex
Inspection number 279388
Inspection dates 7 February 2006 to 8 February 2006
Reporting inspector Faysal Mikdadi Al

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Ringwood Road
School category	Community		Eastbourne
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		East Sussex BN22 8UA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01323 733434
Number on roll	379	Fax number	01323 430341
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Caroline Corsham
Date of previous inspection	15 January 2001	Headteacher	Mr John Sargeant

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Stafford Junior School is a large school in Eastbourne. While some pupils come from an area of high social deprivation, overall, pupils' backgrounds are neither particularly advantaged nor disadvantaged. Pupils are mostly White British. Recent changes in the local population have led to pupils coming in with a wide range of abilities. Since the last short inspection the school has had three headteachers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that Stafford is an effective school which gives good value for money. During the period since the last inspection, the school has had a turbulent time with changes in senior leadership. A period of uncertainty caused the standards to dip. However, since the appointment of the new headteacher and a newly reconstituted senior team, significant improvements have been made. Major advances have been made in the use of data to aid planning and in the strong focus on learning, which has improved pupils' attitudes. There has been an increased emphasis on the practical aspects of the curriculum, which are much enjoyed by pupils. The monitoring and evaluation of the school's work has improved and is now good. These improvements have already resulted in improved standards in every subject area but especially in English. There have been significant improvements in the teaching of mathematics, although the approaches taken are not as well structured as those in literacy lessons. The highly effective use of assessment to show pupils how to improve in English and mathematics has yet to be extended to other subjects.

Pupils are well cared for and guided. As a result they have many opportunities to improve their personal development. They are courteous, pleasant and keen to learn.

The headteacher has tackled the school's weaknesses rigorously and, with the help of a committed staff and a supportive governing body, the school is set to improve still further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further improve standards in mathematics by using the approaches recently used so successfully to improve standards in English. These include more clearly structured guidance from teachers on each activity undertaken, and better opportunities for pupils to evaluate each other's work and to collaborate in solving problems.
- Extend the effective assessment found in English and more recently in mathematics to the other subjects in the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' exceptional enjoyment, their good attitude to work and enthusiastic teaching help bring about the good achievement of pupils currently at the school. Prior attainment on entry to the school varies but it is broadly average. Standards in Year 6 national tests in 2005 were broadly average, and were part of a three-year decline in results. The school has analysed results very carefully to show that in 2005 pupils had made satisfactory progress against the realistic targets which were set for them. Targets for the present Year 6 are challenging and well informed from previous performance and teachers' very good knowledge of pupil's abilities.

Pupils currently in Years 3–6 are making good progress. Their standards are above average and they are on target to reach the high Year 6 national test scores found at

the time of the last inspection. Recent improvements have been particularly good in English. Inspectors looked at a large sample of pupils' work and found good progress over time. Measures such as single-gender classes to help improve girls' performance and confidence in mathematics have had a positive effect. Very good use is made of assessment information to identify individual needs quickly and take effective action to ensure that pupils do not underachieve. Since the last inspection, pupils' standards in ICT have improved.

The level of challenge in teaching stretches the most able well. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of effective support from teachers and classroom assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They show an exceptionally keen enjoyment of school, and their response in many lessons is excellent. Overall, they work at a good pace and co-operate well with others. They willingly take on classroom duties and older pupils have some wider responsibilities, though the school plans to extend this range. A recent allocation of funds to the school council has given their role an added authority and its members are keen to discuss with their peers how the money should be spent or increased. Last year, the misbehaviour of a few pupils led to a high number of exclusions but the school took necessary action and the number is now only four exclusions since the new headteacher arrived. Overall, pupils behave responsibly and safely in lessons and around school. Their economic understanding is well developed through specific opportunities such as running the fruit stall and raising funds for charity. The benefits of physical exercise and healthy lifestyles are well understood. Playtimes are enjoyable times for quiet talk in friendship groups or developing skills with the games equipment. Attendance continues to be above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are consistently well planned and based on the teachers' excellent knowledge of the pupils' varying abilities. Teachers structure lessons well and make pupils clear about what they need to learn. A variety of activities allows pupils with different learning styles to take part. The recent strong focus on literacy has led to standards becoming higher than those expected nationally. Improved teaching has led to pupils' number work improving, although not as speedily as their literacy skills, where pupils get opportunities to work together on their writing, are given clear structure for building on what they have already learnt and are given opportunities to evaluate each other's work. Teachers explain to their pupils how well

they have done and tell them what they should do next in order to improve, although this guidance is much clearer in English and mathematics than in other subjects.

Pupils respond well to their teachers and enjoy their lessons enormously. For example, in one writing lesson, pupils took a great delight in writing very scary openings to their short stories in order to give their teacher a sleepless night. By day two, the teacher reported back on her terror and got pupils to take their work further in order to terrify her even more.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers a good curriculum, with a very good range of focus weeks, out-of-class activities and visits to add further stimuli. Imaginative links are made between subjects, and the school plans to develop this further. Older pupils learn French as an additional subject. Provision for ICT has developed well since the previous inspection and is now good. It is a good feature that pupils with high attainment in ICT and mathematics are given lessons by senior school specialists. Good use is made of booster programmes for pupils needing extra help in basic skills. The individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties are of good quality, and care is taken to adjust work in lessons to meet their needs. The school offers a very good range of clubs and other activities at lunchtimes and after school for boys and girls of all ages, who speak enthusiastically of these experiences. They value not only the skills developed but also the opportunities to contribute to the life of the community through music and drama performances and sports competitions.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are good overall, with outstanding features. Staff know the children well and develop warm relationships with them. A very good feature is the lunchtime club for pupils who have difficulty relating to others in the playground. Child protection procedures are well understood. There are clear procedures for dealing with any incidents of bullying that occur. Pupils say that they feel safe, knowing who to turn to if necessary.

Assessment procedures are good overall. They are excellent in English and mathematics, giving a wealth of information used to adjust work for different ability groups. However, practice is not consistent across other subjects in setting targets for individuals so that they know how to improve. Much less information is gathered on progress in subjects other than in English and mathematics, and not enough is done to include pupils in assessing their own progress. Generally, tasks are sensitively adjusted so that pupils who learn in different ways are given equal opportunity. Strong teamwork between teachers and assistants ensures that children having difficulties in lessons are given extra help.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Since the last inspection, the school's progress was inhibited due to staff changes, especially in the leadership team. The result was a decline in standards. The new headteacher, ably supported by a specialist senior team and a keen governing body, has made significant strides forward since his arrival in September 2005. The result has been a significantly improved morale amongst staff, a much-improved learning ethos and a happier school. These developments have led to a significant improvement in standards and pupils' rate of progress over the last five months. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is well led and managed, ensuring that the team of teaching assistants makes a very good contribution to learning across the school.

The headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, there has been a specific focus on improving pupils' learning through improvements in teaching, the curriculum and the use of assessment information to plan lessons. The real impact has been in literacy and less so in numeracy, which is now beginning to take over as the school's new focus. Monitoring and evaluation are good, with the school's judgements of its performance being accurate. Parents' and other stakeholders' views are sought and these are now being acted upon by the new headteacher.

Following a difficult period, governors have emerged as a stronger, more cohesive body. They keep very close links with the school through their individual subject monitoring and through their very good relationships with the headteacher.

Parents' views of the school are almost entirely positive. They have recognised the recent improvements and clearly have very high hopes of the new headteacher and of their children's school.

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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
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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	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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

Thank you so much for being so welcoming and helpful to us during our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed meeting and chatting to you. We really had a good time watching Year 4 in their Victorian outfits, listening to the Year 6 spooky story openings, watching Year 5 doing some exciting number work and watching Year 3 exercising so well. I am writing to tell you what we thought of your school.

You told us that you liked your school. We understand why you like it because it is a good school. Your school is good because:

- Everybody works hard to do well. Your teachers enjoy working with you and this means that you all enjoy being at school.
- You are doing well in your work and there have been a lot of improvements recently, especially in your literacy lessons.
- You get lots of chances to do exciting things both in and outside the classroom.
- The adults around you look after you very well so that you told us that you felt safe and happy in the school.
- Your headteacher, helped by all the teachers and other adults in the school, is doing a good job improving your school even more.

To help carry on improving your school we have suggested that the really good work done in literacy lessons should now be also done in numeracy lessons. We also suggested that teachers always tell you exactly what you need to do in order to improve your work in the way that they do so well in English.

Once again, thank you so much for welcoming us to your school. We wish you the very best for the future.