



Stonegate Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114523
LEA East Sussex
Inspection number 279404
Inspection dates 4 May 2006 to 4 May 2006
Reporting inspector Kathy Taylor AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Stonegate
School category	Voluntary controlled		Wadhurst
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		East Sussex TN5 7EN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01580 200415
Number on roll	115	Fax number	01580 201135
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Simon Hayes Fisher
Date of previous inspection	18 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Maurice Waller

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 4 May 2006 - 4 May 2006	Inspection number 279404
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Stonegate Primary School is a small village school. Almost all pupils attending the school are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average, and no pupils need help in learning English. Socio-economic circumstances are very favourable. The school gained the Healthy Schools Award. It is part of a small schools Learning Network and works in close partnership with Uplands Technology College and a pre-school provider.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's senior managers and the inspectors agree that this is a good school. Children make a good start in Reception because the teaching is good, though limitations posed by cramped accommodation restrict activities and the access to outdoors. Teaching, learning and the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 are all good, enabling pupils to make good progress and attain standards that are mainly above average by ages 7 and 11.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and pupils have a very strong voice in all aspects of school life. Pupils are justifiably proud of their school, themselves and their achievements. They develop confidence and maturity and form excellent relationships. Parents are therefore very pleased with the school and they support it, and their children's education, very well.

Good leadership and management mean the school provides good value for money, has improved well since the last inspection and has a good capacity for continued improvement. The headteacher sustains the school's very positive, Christian, family ethos, whilst ensuring a clear focus on improvement. As a result of regular monitoring of provision, leaders and managers know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. There are good systems to check the standards and progress made by individual pupils. Staff use the information gained from this well when planning future work to ensure all pupils' needs are met. Nevertheless, this information is not collated in a form that provides a whole school overview to readily identify trends that would help inform further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Seek ways to improve the accommodation in Reception.
- To determine future priorities, collate information about pupils' standards and progress and more precisely analyse whole school trends in performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards are good, although there are occasional year-on-year variations that are typical in such small schools. Most children joining Reception have experience of pre-school provision. Consequently their speaking skills are well developed, their social skills are good and they settle into school quickly. They achieve well and few have learning difficulties. The fairly wide range in their attainment by the end of Reception is linked to their ages, and whether they attend school part time or full time during the first two terms of schooling.

Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress. Standards at age 7 are usually above average, though they were average in 2005. Standards at age 11 are consistently above average, and most pupils meet the challenging targets set for them. Reading standards by age 7 and 11, and mathematics standards at 11, are particularly good. This is because of

very good support for reading, both in school and at home, very effective use of mathematics homework, and a regular "mathematics surgery" for older pupils who experience difficulty. Staff and pupils have worked determinedly since the last inspection to improve standards in writing and science. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT), are improving and are broadly average by age 11. The school is good at helping pupils with learning difficulties to make progress. Consequently, many of them reach the expected level by age 11.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Relationships between boys and girls, and pupils of different ages are excellent. Pupils develop into well-rounded, confident, mature individuals with well developed social skills and strong moral values. Behaviour is exceptional, in class and around the school. Pupils' eagerness to learn, and enjoyment of school, are reflected in their consistently good attendance rates. The good presentation of work reflects pupils' efforts. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy activities and how much they like and respect the headteacher and staff. Pupils of all ages respond extremely well to positions of responsibility and trust, and make an outstanding contribution to the school community. This is evident in the sterling work of the school council, and the excellent support that older pupils give younger ones, including the way they help to resolve conflicts. Pupils' opinions are sought regularly, valued highly and assiduously acted upon. Pupils' contribution to, and their involvement with, the Church and the local and wider community are also very strong.

Pupils have a good understanding of safety and of leading healthy lifestyles. They are very well prepared for future economic well-being because their basic skills are good. Furthermore, responsibilities, such as running of the school tuck shop and managing the school council budget, enable pupils to develop financial and enterprise skills. Enrichment activities help pupils to understand the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils enjoy lessons and value their teachers. One older pupil summed up their feelings by saying, 'We're lucky to have such good teachers who allow us to interact with them'. The spirit of co-operation and the warm relationships between pupils and staff contribute very well to pupils' learning. Pupils' exemplary attitudes to work, and their commitment, also ensure time is not wasted and lessons run smoothly.

Good teaching and learning in Reception result in a strong focus on basic skills, while ensuring children make progress in other areas of learning. Expectations are high and there is a good mix of adult-directed and independent activities on offer throughout

the day. In Years 1 to 6 the teachers' good subject knowledge and thorough planning mean lessons are interesting and brisk. Homework is used well to extend learning. Teachers regularly assess pupils' progress and attainment. They therefore know pupils' academic needs well and match work to different groups, including those with learning difficulties, ensuring pupils learn well. Teaching assistants and volunteers are well deployed, and they provide very effective support for pupils. Marking is regular and provides helpful, encouraging comments. While there are examples of good target setting, there are some variations between classes, and some targets do not give precise enough guidance to pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets all requirements. The curriculum in Reception now gives better attention to each area of learning, but the accommodation restricts the number of activities on offer at any one time. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 maintains good emphasis on English and mathematics while ensuring that other subjects are not squeezed out. Specialist teaching, such as in music and science, enhances provision. Recent updating of ICT equipment has resulted in better facilities that are helping to raise standards. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is promoted well through the curriculum. For example, pupils benefit from a varied and broad arts curriculum, and the school works hard to ensure pupils learn about cultures and religions other than their own. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good. The school is very quick to intervene and provide extra support for pupils who need it, and also runs a good number of catch-up programmes. The school is building on its good curriculum by working to incorporate a more thematic approach and involving pupils in decisions about future learning.

Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular activities. There is a high rate of participation in the sporting, artistic and other interesting activities. Pupils enjoy regular visits, including those in the locality and two residential trips. They are taught about health and safety. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about a recent Healthy Eating Week and the many interesting activities they enjoyed, such as preparing food and visiting a farm and market.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' excellent behaviour and attitudes, at least in part, result from the high quality care provided by all staff. Pupils rightly feel safe and well supported, personally and academically. There are robust procedures to promote pupils' health and safety. Child protection systems are thorough and known to staff. The school has effective links with external agencies to support individual pupils, as and when required. Pupils receive regular advice about how to improve their work, but individual targets are imprecise in some classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. This ensures that the outcomes for pupils are at least good, and that pupils' personal development is exceptional. Because of the strengths in leadership and its good track record, the school is well placed to improve further.

The headteacher is very well respected by staff, governors, pupils and parents. This is because of his commitment to caring for each individual pupil, whilst raising standards and enabling all pupils to achieve well. The headteacher and staff make a good team. They all work very well together to lead each of the subjects, and are regularly involved in monitoring teaching, learning, pupils' progress and standards, so that further improvements can be made. As a result, the staff know the school's strengths and weaknesses well, and use this knowledge to plan for improvement.

Staff have a great deal of data about the standards reached by individual pupils, and their term-by-term and year-on-year progress. This data is used effectively at classroom and individual pupil level. However, it is not collated in such a way as to provide a whole school picture that would readily help leaders to analyse trends to inform future priorities.

Governance is good. Governors are supportive, hardworking and involved. They bring a range of expertise to the school, ensure it meets its statutory requirements and are regularly involved in monitoring provision.

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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	2	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	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	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	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

We really enjoyed talking to you, watching your assembly and looking at your work. Thank you for being so helpful and making us welcome. We think your school is a good school that has one or two areas than can be improved, to make it even better.

These are the things we especially liked about your school

- Everyone who works in your school, or volunteers to help out, makes sure that you are very happy and safe and make good progress.
- You are friendly, polite and helpful. Your attitudes to work and behaviour are outstanding.
- You contribute very well to the smooth running of your school, and staff really value your support and your opinions.
- The staff teach you well and provide many interesting activities that ensure you enjoy school.
- The headteacher leads the school well and makes sure it keeps on improving.

We know everyone wants to do better. We also recognise that you and your teachers are working successfully to improve ICT standards, and to make learning even more interesting, including giving you a say in designing topics.

We have also asked your teachers to do two more things

- To put together all of the information they have about your progress and standards so that they can see clearly if there are any patterns or changes.
- To see whether more can be done to improve the classroom space in Reception.

We would like to wish you lots of success in your future education.