



Stifford Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114885
LEA THURROCK LEA
Inspection number 279464
Inspection dates 19 September 2005 to 20 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. John Godwood LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Parker Road
School category	Community		RM17 5YN
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01375373601
Number on roll	479	Fax number	01375390675
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr.K Williams
Date of previous inspection	5 December 2000	Headteacher	Mrs. Sheila Smith

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 19 September 2005 - 20 September 2005	Inspection number 279464
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. The number in each year group varies considerably and, as a result, the school has mixed-age classes. In some year groups there are many more boys than girls. A relatively high number of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual times. The level of deprivation is average. The knowledge and skills which pupils have when they start school is below average. The number of pupils with special educational needs is above average. Four-fifths of pupils come from White British backgrounds. One pupil in twenty is Black African and there are small numbers from other minority ethnic groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's view is that it is a good school. The inspection found it to be satisfactory, but with particular strengths in pupils' personal development, the quality of care and the breadth of the work which pupils do. The school provides a welcoming and stimulating atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and most are happy, behave well and enjoy learning. It achieves this through a very consistent approach to the way pupils are managed and positively encouraged, a stimulating learning environment in and around the school, and a rich range of subjects and activities that interest the children. Pupils' progress is satisfactory as a result of teaching that is satisfactory overall, although there is some teaching that is outstanding. Lessons are generally well structured and pupils are well managed, but assessment is not used well enough to plan work that meets the needs of all pupils in the class. In the Reception classes, pupils' standards and the quality of provision are satisfactory. Leadership and management are guided by the headteacher's strong vision for the education of the whole child. This results in a good ethos that is liked by pupils and parents. The school is not sufficiently systematic however, in the way it evaluates its own performance and plans improvements. The school provides satisfactory value for money. The school has good capacity for improvement. Since its last inspection, it has successfully dealt with all the key issues. From 2000 to 2004, its test results improved faster than the national trend, though they fell in 2005.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment more systematically to track pupils' progress and plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils. - Observe lessons regularly to check the quality of teaching, and share the outstanding practice that exists in the school. - Evaluate the school's performance more rigorously and use the information gained in planning the main priorities for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils reach standards that are broadly average. National test results at the end of Year 6 rose steadily from below average in 2000 to above average in 2004. However, the results fell in 2005. This was partly because a significant number of pupils joined or left the school during the school year and this affected the test results. Standards at the end of Year 2 vary, depending on pupils' abilities when they join the school. Results were average in 2004 but fell in 2005. When account is taken of pupils' prior attainment, their progress is satisfactory in all year groups. The pupils who took Year 6 tests in 2004, for example, also achieved above average results at the end of Year 2. Their progress between Year 2 and Year 6 was the same as that made by pupils of similar ability in other schools nationally. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for what pupils should achieve. These were met in 2004 but not in 2005. In recent years, boys overall have made slightly less progress than girls. Pupils with special

educational needs make satisfactory progress, in line with other pupils. When they have specific support their progress is faster, but in lessons teachers do not always plan sufficiently for their needs. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good as a result of the school's clear values and good support. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes. They are motivated by the rewards they receive for their achievements and a very consistent approach to behaviour management. There are good opportunities for pupils to be involved in the running of the school and to make a positive contribution to the community. Many pupils take responsibility, for example, as energy wardens or playground buddies. Pupils learn to be safe, economically aware and healthy. The school has its own allotment, for example, where children learn about healthy eating by growing food that is used in the school dinners. Pupils describe how their confidence grows when they are given opportunities to learn independently and the school is working hard to improve this aspect of its provision. Attendance is broadly satisfactory, but despite the school's best efforts a small number of families persist in taking pupils out of school during term time to the detriment of their learning. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Moral and social development are at the heart of much of its work and, as a result, pupils demonstrate exceptional levels of care for each other and their environment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, though some is good and some outstanding. During the inspection, half of the lessons seen were good and one in eight was outstanding. The good lessons are well structured and are characterised by good relationships and by pupils' ability to work together. In science, for example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 worked very well in groups to share ideas about reflection. Each group had a 'facilitator' and a 'noise assessor' and gained good experience of teamwork. Pupils find many of their lessons interesting. They behave well and are positive about learning because teachers and teaching assistants offer good support and guidance. In a minority of lessons, however, time is not used to the full. Pupils maintain their good attitudes but do not learn as much. There are also lessons where some pupils are not fully stretched. In Reception, teachers make good use of information about children's achievements to plan future activities, but this is not always so in Years 1 to 6. Teachers do not use assessment sufficiently to identify what different groups of pupils need to learn. They do not always plan enough for pupils with special educational needs or for the most capable pupils. Discussions with pupils confirmed that some find the work too easy, or even work slowly on purpose to avoid early completion.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a good curriculum that includes a broad range of subjects and stimulates pupils' interest. It has recently introduced a new structure to the work studied by pupils in all year groups. The early indications are that this is effectively helping teachers in delivering the National Curriculum. In addition, it provides many opportunities to promote pupils' personal qualities, such as their independence and responsibility. A well-planned programme for personal, social and health education is supported by the school's ethos and its approach to healthy eating. The curriculum is enriched strongly through music, dance and drama which are taught by visiting specialists. All pupils study Spanish. Educational visits help to bring learning to life and most pupils in Years 4 and 6 benefit from residential visits. Many pupils participate in an impressive variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs. These include opportunities to extend interests in sport or the arts and to develop new ones, such as Irish dancing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for because staff are highly committed and are skilled in promoting health and safety. Child protection arrangements are clear and well understood. Parents of children with special educational needs are well informed about their progress. Parents are generally pleased with the reports on how well their children are doing and how they can improve. A considerable strength is the degree to which the school has developed pupils' concern for each other. Playground buddies give attention to children who appear lonely. The school's values are prominently displayed and supported by most pupils. As a result, pupils feel cared for and safe. All teachers and other adults have a good knowledge of their pupils' pastoral needs and development and are able to respond effectively. The school has recognised that the information it has about the progress pupils are making can be used more productively to raise standards and it has started to make improvements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school provides well for pupils' personal development and care, but the quality of planning to improve standards is less effective. The headteacher provides strong leadership in implementing her clear vision of a safe, stimulating ethos in which pupils develop positive attitudes and enjoy learning. This is seen in the high quality environment, the range and variety of the work taking place and the consistent use of procedures that encourage pupils to behave well and try hard. The headteacher is well supported by her leadership team. The school's knowledge of its own performance is satisfactory but could be improved. Much self-evaluation takes place, but it is not systematic enough in analysing the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' progress or in checking the quality of teaching. The school is forward thinking and takes on many new initiatives, but the planning

and evaluation of these is not well defined enough to ensure they are effective in raising standards. The school is keen to know and respond to pupils' and parents' views. Most parents are pleased with the school and how it is run. Governors provide good support and challenge. They know the school well and are involved in planning and checking its progress. The school uses its financial resources well. The environment is very well maintained, with stimulating displays and interactive whiteboards that have a positive effect on pupils' motivation. Finances are also used well to extend and enrich the work which pupils do. There are enough staff, although turnover is quite high and this has an impact on the quality of teaching. The school has good capacity to improve. The senior leadership team have already planned regular lesson observations and begun to improve its understanding of pupils' progress.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	2	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?	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?	3	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	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 for your friendly welcome when we visited your school and for sharing your views with us. We would like to tell you what we thought about your school. Mrs Smith and her staff work very hard to make sure that you are safe in school, get on well together and have interesting things to learn. We thought that the school has very good displays and equipment and that the adults care for you well. Many of you told us that you enjoy school. Most of you behave well and work hard in lessons. The success cards and assemblies help you to want to do well. We were impressed by the way that you support each other and how well you work together. Some of you told us that you like most lessons because they are fun. Teachers plan your lessons carefully. However, some of you find that parts of some lessons are too easy or too hard. We have asked the school to make sure that teachers know what you have already learned and give you work at the right level. Some of the lessons are extremely good and in those you all learn a lot. We have asked the school to try and make sure that all the lessons are as good as that. You have many clubs and other activities, such as school trips. We liked the fact that many of you help the staff in running the school, and that the staff listen to your opinions. We wish you well for the future.