



# Steam Mills Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 115522  
**LEA** Gloucestershire  
**Inspection number** 279617  
**Inspection dates** 2 May 2006 to 2 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Tom Shine AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Steam Mills
<b>School category</b>	Community		Cinderford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Gloucestershire GL14 3JD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01594 822567
<b>Number on roll</b>	119	<b>Fax number</b>	01594 822567
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Ms Leigh Grantham - maternity leave
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Janet Williams

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 2 May 2006 - 2 May 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 279617
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

## Description of the school

Steam Mills is a smaller than average primary school on the edge of the town of Cinderford in the Forest of Dean. Because of small admission numbers, pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes. A small minority of pupils come from the immediate locality but the school is popular with parents and the rest come from Cinderford itself. Because the town is considered an area of deprivation the school receives additional funding from a variety of sources. Nearly all of the pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average.

## 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 view that this is an effective school that gives good value for money. The quality of education overall, including teaching, is good. This enables the pupils to achieve well from the time they enter the school and to attain above average standards by the time they leave. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, are supported well. They make good progress in English, mathematics and science and in their personal development and well-being. There are good levels of care and support in this friendly, welcoming school. There are also good systems in place to check how well the pupils are progressing. The general quality of teaching in the Reception class is good and enables children to make an effective start to their education. Teaching is also good in the rest of the school, but some marking does not tell the pupils how to improve their work. The curriculum is good in literacy, numeracy and science, and there are good links with the other subjects. The headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school well, but procedures for monitoring teaching are not systematic enough. The headteacher leads the school well and has tackled the issues raised in the last report successfully. She knows what needs to be done to improve the school, which is now well placed to become even more effective.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

ensure the quality of teaching is monitored on a regular basis • ensure that all marking shows pupils more clearly how to improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils throughout the school, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, achieve well. When they enter the Reception, children's key skills fluctuate from year to year but are generally lower than expected, particularly in language. They make good progress and most children reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception. In Years 1 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress. By the time they leave the school, they are attaining above average standards in English, mathematics and science, and pupils are achieving well. The school has focused successfully on improving writing to good effect. Standards in English, particularly in writing, are above average in the current Year 6 and are higher than those of the previous cohort in 2005. The good standards being achieved by the current Year 6 are reflected in the challenging but achievable targets set for this group of pupils.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy coming to school, and have good relationships with each other, their teachers and other staff. Pupils are very polite,

friendly and caring and have a good sense of responsibility. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils respond well to the good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, they benefit from particularly effective links with a school in Kenya. Pupils show respect for each other's feelings and opinions. Membership of the school council is highly valued by the pupils as council members take responsibility effectively for some of the social issues which arise. When the school council was first set up, its members received lots of letters in their 'worry box' from pupils concerned about problems such as bullying. They receive few now because, as they say, "we have sorted out the problems". Pupils make a good contribution to the local community. They raise funds for local charities and take part in local events on a regular basis. For example, older children entertain adults with disabilities before their Christmas Party. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of staying fit and healthy, especially through exercise and healthy eating. Pupils say they feel happy and safe. Through achieving good academic standards, they are developing effective skills that are preparing them well for their future economic well-being. Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. The good quality of teaching is the main reason why the pupils make good progress and achieve well by the time they leave the school. Teachers use their good subject knowledge skillfully, particularly when teaching literacy and numeracy. In a literacy lesson in Year 6, for example, the teacher had high expectations that all pupils would do their best and ensured that the needs of all groups, including those with learning difficulties, were met. The lesson was presented clearly, enabling all pupils to develop their skills in persuasive letter-writing well. All groups of pupils responded enthusiastically to the teacher's wide range of incisive questions, which tested their understanding effectively. Teachers know the pupils well, enabling them to set realistic targets. They have good systems to check on how well the pupils are learning and set work accurately matched to the wide range of needs in mixed-age classes. Additional staff are also used effectively to ensure that pupils are given appropriate help to achieve their targets. The quality of marking of pupils' work is variable and not all of it is up to the best practice in the school. Some is not as effective as it should be in helping pupils to improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good curriculum for its pupils. It is careful to plan work that matches the wide range of abilities in mixed-age classes and to ensure that pupils of higher attainment are appropriately challenged. In addition to strong emphasis on English, mathematics and science, it also makes good provision for other subjects such as history, geography, music, design and technology and physical education. A

particularly good feature of teachers' practice is the way subjects are often interlinked in lessons. Pupils say they like this feature and this is reflected in how well they are engaged in their learning. There is insufficient accommodation to house a computer suite and the computers in the classrooms are quite old. The school is addressing this issue by purchasing a batch of laptop computers to enable its pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) more effectively throughout the curriculum. There is a wide range of clubs that are well attended and enable pupils to enjoy creative, academic and sporting opportunities outside lessons. These, and a number of visiting speakers, help to enrich the curriculum effectively.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good care for its pupils. Adults know their pupils well and are strongly committed to their welfare. As a result, pupils say they feel safe and secure. There is also good care for children who enter the school in the Reception class. At the start of the school day, parents are encouraged to come in with their child so that children soon settle in a gentle, caring atmosphere. Effective child protection arrangements are in place. Staff are alert to any signs that pupils, on rare occasions, might be distressed or anxious. Good personal support and guidance are provided for pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities. The teacher responsible for this provision ensures that the teaching assistants provide work that is matched well to the needs of these pupils and this enables them to make good progress. There are very well organised arrangements for pupils about to transfer to a number of secondary schools. These transition procedures are effective in taking the stress out of the impending moves.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has a clear vision of what she wants to achieve for her pupils. This vision is fully supported by all staff. Together with subject and specialist teachers, the headteacher manages this small school effectively. There is a unity of purpose in the school to raise standards further. Staff are therefore focused successfully on ensuring that all groups of pupils make good progress. They are helped in this by good systems to track the progress both of individuals and groups of pupils. Data is analysed carefully to identify where support should be targeted. The subject managers for all subjects and areas, most of whom have several responsibilities, have a clear awareness of the school's needs and the action required to resolve weaknesses. They have very positive attitudes, high expectations and are focused on ensuring all groups of pupils achieve well. The monitoring of teaching takes place but not on a systematic enough basis to ensure its quality remains at least consistently good. In analysing its strengths and weaknesses, the school has taken into account the views of pupils, staff and parents. For example, it canvasses the views of parents on a regular basis through questionnaires. The school improvement plan for the current year contains relevant

priorities, including a focus on developing pupils' enquiry skills in history and geography and improving the ICT provision. Governance is good. The governors are very supportive and committed and work effectively for the 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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Dear Pupils Thank you very much for all the help you gave to the inspectors when they came to your school recently. We liked talking to you and to your teachers and watching you learn. Now we want to share with you what we thought about your school. These are the things we liked most about your school:

- When you first come to school, you make a good start to your education in the Reception class.
- You do well in English, mathematics and science because you are taught well.
- You told us you feel safe and well supported.
- Mrs Williams runs the school well and makes sure those of you who need extra help get it.
- You enjoy school, behave well and get on well with each other and with all members of staff.
- You are taught to realise the importance of exercise and healthy eating.

But to make your school even better, we have suggested some things that we think will help.

- There needs to be more regular checks on lessons to help to make them as interesting as possible.
- We think it would help if all your teachers, when they mark your work, told you what you need to do to improve it.

Yours sincerely  
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