



Stow-on-the-Wold Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115540
LEA Gloucestershire
Inspection number 279622
Inspection dates 29 November 2005 to 29 November 2005
Reporting inspector Patricia Davies RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Edward's Drive
School category	Community		Stow-on-the-Wold
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Cheltenham,
			Gloucestershire GL54 1AW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01451 830784
Number on roll	125	Fax number	01451 830784
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Dick Glazier
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Rebecca Scutt

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Stow-on-the-Wold is a small primary school and pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. The number of pupils attending has grown in recent years. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, but pupils from other ethnic groups have increased. Almost all pupils are of White British origin and are fluent in English. The school also has pupils from Exclusive Brethren families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties has increased, and is average. When pupils join the reception class, their attainment is below expected levels. There have been changes to staff in the last three years. The headteacher joined the school three years ago.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Stow-on-the-Wold Primary is a good school, and offers good value for money. The school takes a more modest view of its effectiveness and judges the school's effectiveness as satisfactory. This judgement reflects the headteacher's determination to make sure that good teaching and learning are firmly established right across the school. In this, the school has been successful. All pupils achieve well in response to good teaching, although expectations could sometimes be higher, particularly for the more able. Pupils in the reception group are taught well and, having joined the school with below average attainment, make good progress. By the time pupils leave the school at Year 6, standards are broadly average.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of stimulating learning opportunities and benefit from good quality care and guidance. The school's leadership is energetic and determined. It has gained the wholehearted satisfaction of parents and secured a greater role in the local community. The overall level of improvement has been good, and is based firmly on close and careful checks of the school's work. Senior management has a clear understanding of what must be done to develop further. Achievements so far show the school is well placed to move forward. Governors are highly supportive, but are not yet sufficiently involved in planning the school's future and monitoring what it does.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that learning targets are reviewed regularly and work is always challenging so that expectations of achievement are as high as they can possibly be, particularly for those who are more able
- increase the involvement of governors in checking the school's academic performance and planning its future.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Academic achievement is good. From a starting point that is below expected levels when pupils join the school, they make consistently good progress through the reception group and Years 1 and 2. Standards are average in reading and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. However, in response to particular weaknesses in language and literacy among reception-aged pupils, the school has given close attention to improving writing skills. As a result, standards in this subject are above national average by the end of Key Stage 1.

Until very recently, the results of national tests taken by Year 6 pupils have indicated that the school has been less successful at maintaining good progress in Years 3 to 6. Shortcomings have been tackled successfully through the analysis of information about pupils' attainment. This strategy pinpointed areas of weakness and helped to adjust planning. The first indication of improvement was the considerable increases in the Year 6 test results in English and mathematics in 2005. Inspection evidence, taken

from pupils' work and from lessons this term, shows that good progress is being maintained across Years 3 to 6. Targets are suitably challenging for most pupils, and the attention given to improving writing and mathematics is effective. Standards in the current Year 6 are broadly average in English and mathematics. Standards in science are above national expectations. However, although expectations have been raised, some pupils could still sometimes be challenged further, particularly the more able.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This area of the school's work is good, as demonstrated in pupils' good behaviour and their enthusiasm about the school's activities. As one pupil said 'It's just a great school!' Many pupils take part in a wide range of sporting activities, and all show a good understanding of the need to live a healthy lifestyle. The many opportunities to consider health and safety issues ensure that pupils are well aware of personal safety. Attendance is broadly average.

Pupils appreciate the serious consideration given to their views. They take pride in planning improvements, which give them opportunities to work as a team. Pupils consider how best to use money they have collected from fund-raising activities. In this way, they begin to gain skills and understanding that will stand them in good stead for adult life. Independence is also encouraged during practical activities in subjects such as science. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are many opportunities for discussion and reflection. Strong links with the local community nurture relationships and a sense of responsibility in a wider sphere. The school is conscious of the need to introduce pupils to cultures beyond their own. Good opportunities, given through arts and creative activities and in subjects such as geography and religious education, ensure that they have a growing understanding of traditions in other parts of the world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils make a strong start in the reception group where routines are clear and they are encouraged to develop independence and confidence. Good teaching exists right across the school. Pupils are expected to complete a good amount of work, and they always rise to the challenge. They concentrate well in lessons, even when they might be a little frustrated, for example, by technical difficulties with computers. Activities are interesting and varied, and questioning is directed at all pupils, including the quieter ones. The quality of marking is a particularly strong feature of teaching, because pupils have consistent feedback on how they can make their work better. Sometimes, this feedback becomes a valuable dialogue between pupil and teacher. Activities are usually well-matched to pupils'

abilities, but are sometimes not quite challenging enough. For example, more able pupils could sometimes be asked to complete more demanding tasks.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, particularly because the school does much to enrich and broaden pupils' learning. Pupils remarked on how much fun it gave them. The school's 'special weeks', for example, are stimulating and varied, and include practical and creative activities that energise pupils and staff. The school notes pupils' full attendance during these occasions! This practical approach to learning has yet to be fully introduced across the day-to-day curriculum. Pupils are enthusiastic about science, where learning is effectively promoted through investigations. Good attention is given to extending basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, and these are often skilfully linked with other subjects. Significant improvement to ICT resources and curriculum planning is already having an impact on the confidence of teachers and pupils. The curriculum for reception pupils is well planned, and has been enhanced by the development of an outdoor learning area, which encourages pupil's imagination, social skills and independent learning. An interesting range of visits, residential trips in Years 2 and 6, sporting and out-of-school activities and visitors, all widen pupils' experience.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pastoral care is strong, and enhanced through good links with outside agencies. The development of 'drop-in' and community facilities offers additional support for families and vulnerable pupils. Health and safety routines are securely in place, and procedures for child protection are clear and widely understood. Pupils' understanding of health and safety is developed through a well-planned curriculum for sex and drugs education. Older pupils are encouraged to debate real life issues, such as bullying. Good attendance is celebrated by giving awards, and absence is monitored carefully. Parents are especially appreciative of the school's care. As one parent remarked, 'Staff treat children with respect and kindness.' Special attention is given to meeting the needs of pupils from Exclusive Brethren families and those from minority ethnic and Traveller backgrounds. As a result, these pupils are a well integrated part of the school community.

Academic guidance and support are good. The strongest feature is the care given to marking pupils' work and pointing to what could be improved. Pupils know their learning targets for English and mathematics. However, although these are reviewed throughout the year, they are not always checked frequently enough. As a result, sometimes, pupils' attainment has already outstripped their learning targets before their targets are changed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The driving force behind improvement is the energy and high expectations of the headteacher. Parents recognise her influence, and are very satisfied with the school. Key teachers are actively involved in promoting academic achievement. A good knowledge of the school's strengths and shortcomings has been gained from detailed analysis of what is happening and from much consultation with parents and others. The school has been keen to make sure that good progress is established in all year groups so that it can be confident that it is effective. Inspection evidence shows this positive position has been secured, which indicates that the school is able to continue this good rate of improvement.

Governors are well organised and greatly supportive. They ensure that the school has the resources it needs to do well, and are responsive to ideas for making further improvements. One such suggestion was for more attention to be given to gifted and talented pupils. As a result, the school is now part of a local initiative aimed at encouraging this group of pupils. Governors make formal visits to the school, but their monitoring activities are not yet extensive enough to allow them to play a full part in checking and influencing the school's academic achievements.

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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	3	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	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	3	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

Stow-on-the-Wold Primary School St Edwards Drive Stow-on-the-Wold Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL54 1AW

29 November 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming during our visit to your school. This letter is to tell you about what we found out about your school while we were with you.

What we like about your school:

- Your school has worked hard and successfully to make sure that you all do well, that learning is fun and you enjoy your activities
- You all behave well, concentrate hard and do a lot of work
- You particularly like practical activities, like those you do in science and during 'special weeks'
- Staff take good care of you and make sure that you have lots of advice about how to make your work better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Ensure that you are always challenged to do your very best, including those of you who find work easy
- Help your governors to get to know more about your work and progress so that they help the school even more than they do now.

We wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Davies Lead Inspector