



Stoke Prior First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116735
LEA Worcestershire
Inspection number 279882
Inspection dates 28 September 2005 to 29 September 2005
Reporting inspector Andrew Watters HMI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Ryefields Road
School category	Community		Stoke Prior
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 4ND
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01527 832520
Number on roll	132	Fax number	01527 832520
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr D Mellors
Date of previous inspection	22 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Jan Evans

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).

Description of the school

Stoke Prior First School is situated in the village of Stoke Prior a few miles south of Bromsgrove. Many homes are privately owned and most pupils are of White British origin. When pupils enter the school their attainment is generally average although each new group of pupils reflects a wide spread of ability, from above to below average. There is no pre-school provision in the village and the school does not have a nursery.

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 judges its overall effectiveness as very good and HMI agree with this judgement. Standards in the national tests are consistently above average and many, though not all pupils, achieve very well. Some reach high standards and make outstanding progress. Standards in the Foundation Stage are good with the majority of children making good progress from their different starting points. The school is a very welcoming community that values highly the contribution of each pupil and adult. It strives for improvement and successfully avoids complacency. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall but in a few lessons the pupils' work was not challenging enough. The pupils' behaviour, their attitudes and their personal development are good. The relatively open access to the school playground from a public highway presents a potential danger, which has not been given sufficient consideration. The headteacher provides good leadership and has high expectations. She ensures a relentless focus on improvement and the development of a strong team ethic, based on shared accountability. Senior teachers and subject leaders make a positive contribution to raising standards. Self-evaluation is good and planning for improvement is a strong feature. Monitoring systems are effective although it is not always clear how important areas for development are to be prioritised and followed up. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school gives good value for money and its capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that all pupils' achievements are good, consistent with their different starting points and that their work is sufficiently challenging in all lessons.
- take all reasonable precautions to ensure pupils' safety and security during breaks for play.
- sharpen monitoring procedures to show how areas for development will be prioritised and followed up.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards overall in writing, reading and mathematics are either in line with, or above what are expected for the pupils' ages. The results of national tests have been consistently above the national average. Some pupils reach high standards, particularly in reading and mathematics. Nearly all pupils achieve well and make good progress based on their capabilities and starting points. Many achieve their challenging targets. This is a consistent picture from the Reception class through Key Stage 1 and then into Years 3 and 4. From a relatively low starting point when they entered the reception class, over three quarters of the pupils who took the Key Stage 1 tests in 2005 made outstanding progress. While there is no significant underachievement in any year group the pupils' achievement in a few lessons was not as good as it might have been. The

relatively lower levels achieved in writing and mathematics, by a small group of pupils in Year 1 and Year 3, is being monitored and tackled well. A good range of strategies is being used to help them improve their work and quicken their rate of progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good, they behave well and enjoy coming to school. They are polite and very welcoming to visitors. The great majority have positive attitudes and try hard to do their best, particularly when their work is challenging. They are cheerful and talk confidently about why they like their school. They show consideration for one another, respect for adults and most work really well in pairs and small groups. Attendance is good and above the national average.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are developing a good sense of justice and democracy and understanding of other cultures and religions. Pupils are tolerant and show a high level of care for each other. Year 4 pupils are good role models and respond really well to their responsibilities. The 'playground friends' and 'buddy bus stop' initiatives are greatly appreciated by all pupils. Class and school councils provide an important opportunity for the pupils' voice to be heard. The pupils know the importance of keeping safe and were keen to talk about the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. Their growing understanding of environmental, social and global issues is helping them understand the needs of their community and equip them for adult responsibilities and the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning ranges from satisfactory to good and overall it is good. This confirms the school's view. Teachers have excellent relationships with the pupils and generally high expectations for their behaviour and academic attainment. On a few occasions however, low-level noise in lessons was allowed to distract the pupils from their work. Good lessons were characterised by teachers' challenging questions, very good explanations, clear instructions and effective planning which made sure that the pupils knew exactly what they were required to learn by the end of a lesson. In the satisfactory lessons the pupils' progress was reasonable but no better because they were not given sufficient help to achieve their targets, or their work was not quite challenging enough. Teachers' marking is frequently good and helps the pupils to improve their work. Assessment information is used very well by all teachers to set targets for improvement and nearly always ensure that the pupils' work is matched well to their capabilities. Teaching assistants generally make a very positive contribution to helping the pupils succeed in their work. A range of good initiatives equip parents well to help their children at home.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned and stimulating. It generally matches the needs of the pupils well and meets statutory requirements. Visits to the locality and visitors in school enhance the quality of experiences offered to all pupils. Year 4 pupils have the opportunity to take part in a popular residential trip to Dorset and pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 enjoy a range of after school clubs that provide opportunities for keeping fit, playing football and developing artistic skills. Specialist teaching in music, physical education, science and modern foreign languages adds to the good quality of the curriculum. The provision for information and communication technology is developing well and some pupils in Year 3 are very proficient in their use of personal laptop computers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

All staff are committed to ensuring the highest level of care, guidance and support for the pupils, and in nearly all respects this is achieved well. A breakfast club and 'wraparound' care arrangements make a positive contribution to the pupils' well-being. Parents are very positive about the school. One parent said: "I cannot rate the staff highly enough. It is a pleasure to take my child to school". The pupils feel secure and are supported well to achieve their targets. The school is a very attractive environment, which is well maintained and in turn, respected by the pupils. Risk assessments are carried out systematically and regularly reviewed. Nevertheless, one important area of potential danger has been overlooked. There is relatively open access to the school playground from a public highway and during break time and lunchtime the school is vulnerable to possible intrusion. The current arrangements for supervising the pupils at these times fall short of the school's high expectations.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management and the school's capacity to improve are good. The headteacher has high expectations for the pupils and all staff. She is a good leader who places great importance on teamwork and collective responsibility. She is determined to maintain and further improve the good quality of education offered to the pupils and is relentless in her pursuit of raising standards. Senior teachers and subject leaders play an important and influential role. Together with the headteacher they use assessment information very well to ensure a rigorous focus on tracking the pupils' progress and checking their attainment levels. The headteacher knows how well each pupil is achieving and whether they should be doing even better. Subject leaders keep a close watch on the pupils' achievements in all subjects, which is a strong feature of the school's provision.

The school improvement plan is used well to guide the school's development. Self-evaluation is good and takes into account the views of staff, parents, governors and pupils. It is clear that this is a successful school that does not rest on its many achievements. Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are effective and there is a very supportive framework for improvement. However it is not always clear how areas that have been identified for development will be followed up and when improvements should be made. The governing body plays a full role in leading and managing the school and is keen to improve its systems for holding the school to account for the standards achieved by the pupils.

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?	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	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?	3	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 for welcoming me to your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and visiting your lessons. You are all very polite and helpful and for the two days I was with you, I felt a part of your school. Thank you for sharing your work with me. I could see that you try hard to do your best and help each other, in the classrooms and on the playground. Well done!

I also really enjoyed talking with your teachers and was very pleased to see how well they and you got on together in lessons. Your teachers, the headteacher and all the other adults in school work hard to make sure that you enjoy school and do well with your work.

I have asked Mrs Evans and your teachers to do a few things that should help you get on even better than you are doing now. First of all I think that some of you need a little more help in lessons to make sure that you always succeed with your work. Secondly when Mrs Evans and your teachers find out that something they are asking you to do needs to be better, I want them to check that this happens, even more carefully than they are already doing. And last of all I want your school to make even more certain that your playground and field are safe and secure.

I think that you are very lucky to have lots of opportunities to do exciting things in your lessons and after school. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly.