



Stoke St Michael Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123662
Local Authority Somerset
Inspection number 281529
Inspection date 18 October 2006
Reporting inspector Don Mason

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Moonhill Road
School category	Community		Stoke St Michael
Age range of pupils	4-11		Radstock BA3 5LG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01749 840470
Number on roll (school)	43	Fax number	01749 840470
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	D E Forrester
		Headteacher	C McFarlane
Date of previous school inspection	30 October 2000		

Age group 4-11	Inspection date 18 October 2006	Inspection number 281529
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

There are two classes in the school, one for pupils in the Reception Year, Year 1 and Year 2, and one for pupils in Years 3 to 6. All the pupils are from white British families. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is currently average, although disproportionately high in some year groups. A significant number of pupils leave or join the school each year other than at the usual times of joining or leaving. The headteacher recently returned to the school after a long period of ill health.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school that has a friendly and happy atmosphere. The school has benefited recently from very good support from the local authority, helping it move forward. The newly returned headteacher is working enthusiastically and effectively with staff to build on this success. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and a clear strategy is in place to bring about further improvements. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The staff work together well as a team and are committed to raising standards. However the two class teachers have not yet had sufficient opportunities to develop their leadership skills. Plans are in hand to remedy this situation. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Provision for the small group of Reception children is satisfactory. Work is well matched to their abilities and, by the time they begin Year 1, most have achieved average standards. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the other year groups and standards are average by Year 6. The latest unconfirmed test results and other inspection evidence indicate that pupils' progress is improving, particularly in writing. This is because teachers are using assessment information more effectively to match work to pupils' ability. However, the school recognises that it has more work to do in this area to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving.

The school works well with outside agencies and other local schools to promote pupils' learning. The school's caring, community ethos contributes significantly to pupils' good personal development and well-being. This is reflected in their generally good behaviour, above-average attendance and the way pupils care for each other. Pupils are proud of their school and respond positively when their views are sought. They have good knowledge and understanding about what they need to do to stay fit and healthy. A relatively generous number of well-trained teachers' assistants provide well-targeted support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. These pupils make satisfactory progress. The pupils are well cared for. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving as teachers help the pupils to understand their achievements and what they have to do to improve. The curriculum is satisfactory and enriched by a good range of visits, events and sporting opportunities which pupils appreciate.

Governors' support for the school is satisfactory. Training provided by the local authority is improving their ability to help the school in its efforts to move forward. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Recent improvements in the progress made by higher-attaining pupils are an indication of this.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Ensure that even more rigorous use is made of assessment information to plan work that matches pupils' needs as precisely as possible.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. Children start school with broadly average levels of attainment. They make sound progress in all areas of their development in Reception. Pupils make satisfactory progress through Years 1 to 6 so that standards by the end of Year 6 are average. The latest unconfirmed test results and other inspection evidence indicate that the rate of progress is improving, particularly for higher-attaining pupils and in writing in Year 6. This is mainly because teachers are now making use of assessment information to check pupils' progress more thoroughly. The assessment information is also helping the school to set increasingly challenging targets and to provide appropriate support for those pupils who need it. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. A strength of the school is the way boys and girls of all ages care for one another. Pupils enjoy school, as shown by their good attendance and punctuality. Most pupils are well behaved and courteous and show respect and concern for others. Through activities such as visits to the local quarry and writing health and safety reports about the school, the pupils develop a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in and out of school. They say that they feel safe in school and that bullying is not a problem. Through the good links with the church and residents of the village, pupils develop sound citizenship skills and contribute well to the development of the school and the community. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing the skills needed for future learning and achievement. However, there are insufficient opportunities to show initiative in class and to develop their team-working skills. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are taught to recognise and appreciate the values and beliefs of people from a variety of cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving as teachers make better use of assessment information to plan to meet the needs of all pupils. The pace of lessons has improved since the last inspection and there are well-established routines that help pupils to settle quickly to their work. In most lessons, activities are well planned and meet the needs of pupils of differing ability so that pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. Occasionally teachers talk to the whole class for too long so that pupils become restless and the best use is not always made of teaching assistants. Work is sometimes given to the whole class which higher-attaining pupils

find too easy. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils who find learning difficult. In some lessons, pupils are encouraged to assess how well they have achieved. Marking is satisfactory and pupils say that they find it helpful.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and supports the satisfactory progress made by all pupils. The school is undertaking a review of the curriculum in order to improve further the provision for pupils in the mixed-age classes. There is a strong emphasis on English, mathematics and science. Literacy, numeracy and computer skills are satisfactorily promoted in other subjects of the curriculum. There is a need to provide more activities which promote pupils' investigative skills, particularly in mathematics and science. The curriculum is well matched to the needs of children in Reception. The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of healthy living. It is enriched by a good range of additional activities, special events, visits and visitors that further develop pupils' skills and enjoyment. Classrooms and other areas of the school are enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of guidance and support is satisfactory overall. In this caring community, pupils feel happy and secure and they grow in self-confidence. Careful attention is paid to health and safety issues and child protection. Risk assessments are fully in place and the school site is secure. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet government requirements. Sensitive induction and transfer procedures ensure that pupils settle happily into new routines. The school has good links with parents and a range of external agencies that support pupils' health, safety and welfare. The school has a generous allocation of well-trained support staff, who provide good care and support for pupils with learning needs and disabilities. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving as teachers develop procedures to help pupils understand their achievements and what they have to do to improve. Pupils find teachers' marking helpful and say that the new homework arrangements are helping them to learn.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, who has recently returned to her post, recognises the value of the good support provided for the school by the local authority. She is keen to build on the achievements so far and the school is now well placed to move forward. She is well regarded by parents, staff and pupils and, under her leadership, the staff work very well together as a team. Because of the disruption in staffing arrangements in recent years, the two class teachers have had insufficient opportunities to develop their leadership roles. The school recognises the need to remedy this situation urgently.

The school evaluates its own performance satisfactorily and has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. Based on this knowledge a great deal of work has been done to improve teaching and assessment arrangements, to deal with behaviour problems and to raise achievement. There is clear evidence of the school's success in these areas, especially in the improved performance of higher-attaining pupils. The governors provide satisfactory support for the school. As a result of recent training and improved information from the school, they are becoming increasingly effective in helping the school to move forward. Progress since the last inspection has been slower than the school would have liked but it has been satisfactory overall.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. We particularly enjoyed visiting your classrooms, seeing the work you were doing, and talking to you about your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We found that your school provides you with a sound education.

Good things about your school:

- Your school is a friendly and happy one.
- Your teachers are checking your work in detail and this is helping you to make progress.
- Your attendance is good, you enjoy school and usually behave well.
- You care about each other and older pupils are very good at looking after younger ones.
- The staff provide good care for you and you know how to stay healthy and keep safe.
- You find the lessons interesting and enjoy the visits and activities which the teacher provides for you.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Make sure that the work the teachers give you to do is always set at the right level so that you learn as much as possible.

We wish you all the best for the future.