



Stratford-sub-Castle Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126361
LEA Wiltshire
Inspection number 282097
Inspection dates 7 June 2006 to 7 June 2006
Reporting inspector Hazel Callaghan AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Stratford-sub-Castle
School category	Voluntary controlled		Salisbury
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Wiltshire SP1 3LL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01722 327227
Number on roll	133	Fax number	01722 327227
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Ann Holme
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2000	Headteacher	Miss Kay Williamson

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	7 June 2006 - 7 June 2006	282097

© 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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Stratford-Sub-Castle Church of England Primary is a fairly small school. Pupils come from a wide area. Most are from families of White British heritage but a few children are from minority ethnic backgrounds, some of whom are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. A large number of pupils join the school after the Reception Year and consequently each year group varies considerably in size. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. The school has recently concluded a large building and renovation programme that has significantly improved the accommodation.

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 rapidly improving school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. This judgement reflects the school's own view of itself. The care, support and guidance provided for pupils are outstanding, which result in pupils' good personal development and well-being, and their very good relationships. Pupils have a wide range of personal and learning needs, especially those who join the school later in their education. Many have found difficulties in their previous schools but under the sensitive support provided by staff they settle well. One parent wrote, 'Moving my children here was the best thing I ever did... It is a happy school and it's happy children that learn'. This comment explains the philosophy that underpins the school's strong ethos.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory although standards are well below average. Many positive strategies have been implemented and this is beginning to improve the pupils' progress in many areas, but not sufficiently in writing where improvement is slower. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the provision for children in the Foundation Stage is also satisfactory. The school has developed a more rigorous system of monitoring pupils' work and progress. As a result, teachers are developing higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. This approach is beginning to improve standards, although it is not yet applied consistently across the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good. She has a clear view of the priorities for improvement. The school's recent self-evaluation, in which the views of parents were sought, has identified strengths and areas for development accurately. The school's partnership with parents is good. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory but strong teamwork and the impetus of the strategies already in place give the school the capacity to improve further. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, especially in writing, by refining the strategies already being implemented for improving pupils' learning.
- Improve teaching by ensuring that teachers' expectations of pupils' progress, especially the more able, are consistently high.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory although standards throughout the school are well below average. This is due to the large number of children who join the school in all year groups, many of whom have had difficult experiences in their previous schools and find learning difficult. The school enables these pupils to settle well but their low attainment affects the school's overall standards. There is a rising trend in standards in Year 6 but attainment in writing remains a weakness throughout the school.

When they start in the Reception class many children have below average personal and social skills and speech and language difficulties, and their skills and experiences are below those usually found in children of this age. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. In all other areas of learning their progress is satisfactory, but most children do not reach the expected goals for learning. This year the range of abilities in the Reception class is more in line with that found nationally. The children have made steady progress across all areas of learning and most are well on their way to reaching the learning goals expected by the end of the Reception Year.

Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well. They are given good levels of support and the activities are well matched to their needs. The more able pupils, however, make insufficient progress. The school's attention in the past has been on the pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and activities have not been sufficiently challenging for the more able. Expectations are beginning to rise and the achievement of pupils of all abilities is improving as a result.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Relationships are very good and pupils evidently care for one another, reflecting the excellent levels of care shown to them.

Pupils say they enjoy school and their attitudes to work are good. They have no concerns over bullying, knowing that if it occurs it will be addressed by teachers. Most pupils behave sensibly. Those with emotional and behavioural problems are managed well and they rarely create difficulties. There has been only one exclusion this year, which is a marked improvement on previous years. Attendance for many pupils has also improved and is satisfactory. Those who have had difficulties in other schools settle very well and are happy at Stratford because of the high levels of support.

Pupils develop a good awareness of how to keep themselves healthy but do not always use this knowledge to make positive choices. Pupils recognise the possible dangers around them and use this knowledge well to keep safe. They play a positive part in the school community. For example, older pupils act as playtime 'Buddies' and the school council actively seeks ways to improve the school's facilities. It has achieved success, for example, in providing a large track around the field that can be used in all weathers. Pupils are effectively developing a range of skills to help them in their future education such as co-operation, teamwork, initiative and independence. Overall, however, preparation for their future economic well-being remains satisfactory, because of weaknesses in their academic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory but has several strengths. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and structure the activities well so that pupils understand what they are to do and the important aspects to focus upon. The marking of pupils' work is very good, especially in the oldest class. Teachers' comments help pupils to understand how well they are doing, and what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants and teachers work well together, and pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are encouraged and supported well. Teachers' expectations for pupils' standards of work and the amount of progress to be made in each lesson are satisfactory. Expectations have improved but are still inconsistent, especially for the more able pupils who do not make sufficiently good progress. The few pupils with English as an additional language participate satisfactorily in lessons as they receive good support. However, there is insufficient expertise within the teaching staff to enable these pupils to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and has some strong features. The school has improved the way the curriculum is planned and there is a focus on making the curriculum more interesting and stimulating by linking subjects, but this is still in its early stages of development.

Children in the Reception Year benefit from a well balanced range of activities that meets their needs satisfactorily. Elsewhere, effective attention is given to ensuring that pupils in mixed-age classes are taught the expected range of basic skills and knowledge. Teachers plan a good range of activities that meets pupils' learning needs, although pupils have insufficient opportunity to write at length and this slows their progress in English. The curriculum is effectively adapted to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to ensure they play an active part in all lessons. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved and further improvements, including the purchase of additional computers, are being introduced.

The strength of the curriculum is the range of additional activities, visits and visitors to school that extend pupils' knowledge and experiences. There is a satisfactory focus on developing pupils' awareness of healthy living and pupils enjoy the after-school activities that are often led by external tutors and athletes.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. Pupils' emotional well-being is promoted extremely well and they feel very secure and cared for. A large proportion of children are admitted into each class throughout the year and many have low self-esteem. The school enables these pupils to settle well and their attitudes to school and learning improve significantly because of the sensitive care they receive. Outside agencies, such as 'School Start' and the Speech and Language Service, are used very well to support pupils' learning. It is the importance that the school places on each individual that makes their care and support outstanding. Staff take the care of the pupils very seriously and provision for child protection and health and safety is strong. There has been a successful emphasis on improving pupils' behaviour and getting pupils to school regularly so that they are now better able to learn.

The progress of all pupils is properly tracked and targets are regularly set and reviewed. Expectations of their future attainment are becoming more challenging as teachers implement strategies to raise standards. Targets for future learning are shared with pupils so that they understand how to improve and they are encouraged to assess their own work and progress. The school has built a very good partnership with parents, seeing them as an important part of pupils' progress and well-being.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership provided by the headteacher, who is strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, is good. This has resulted in the exceptional care and support provided for all pupils. The school has made improvements in many areas since its last inspection but standards are still not high enough. Raising standards is now the clear focus for improvement. Strategies for providing intensive support for pupils' learning have been implemented and this is raising teachers' expectations of pupils' progress. There are thorough systems for monitoring teaching and pupils' progress which are enabling the school to evaluate its performance more effectively. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate and there is an appropriate plan for further school improvement. Senior staff are effective in leading their subjects and other staff are keen to develop their satisfactory leadership skills further so that management of the curriculum continues to improve. Governors have improved their strategic role and provide satisfactory leadership for the school. They are very supportive and well-informed. The pupils and parents are consulted and their views are taken carefully into account when changes are suggested. Based on the good teamwork and evidence of past improvements, the school's capacity for further improvement is good.

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	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	3	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?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	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	2	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	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

I am writing to say thank you for making us feel welcome in your school and for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what we found out about your school.

What we liked about the school

• It is a good school where you are happy and enjoy most of your lessons. • You get on very well with each other and with the adults in the school. • You behave sensibly and are kind to each other. • We think you try hard to do well in your work. • You understand the importance of keeping healthy and safe. • You are given opportunities to take responsibility and you do it well. • Your headteacher and staff want to do all they can to make the school even better • The teachers look after you extremely well and help you feel safe. • There are lots of activities for you to enjoy, especially sporting activities and visits.

What we have asked the school to do now

• We have asked your teachers to help you all to improve the standards of your writing in particular and to make faster progress in your work, especially those of you who are more able.