



Stokenham Area Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 113223
Local Authority Devon
Inspection number 289551
Inspection date 4 December 2006
Reporting inspector Jacqueline Marshall

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Stokenham
School category	Community		Kingsbridge
Age range of pupils	4-11		TQ7 2SJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01548 580551
Number on roll (school)	137	Fax number	01548 580336
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Brenda Winter
		Headteacher	Sue Jezard
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2001		

Age group 4-11	Inspection date 4 December 2006	Inspection number 289551
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© 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

This is a smaller-than-average primary school. It serves a large rural community, having been purpose-built to replace a number of smaller schools. As a result, over a third of its pupils use school transport each day. The headteacher took up her post in September.

Attainment on entry to the school is average. It has a greater-than-average number of pupils joining or leaving during their school career. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and none speaks English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is below average.

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 an improving school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Parents praise the headteacher and staff for creating an 'increasingly positive and dynamic' atmosphere over the last term. The clear focus on good care results in the overwhelming majority of parents and pupils recognising the strong community spirit. This is demonstrated in the way that all children, whatever their backgrounds, settle quickly, whether starting in Reception or joining from other schools. Pupils are good at welcoming new friends and develop caring attitudes to one another. Good relationships with staff and the wide range of interesting activities mean that pupils enjoy coming to school and behave well; all key factors in pupils' good personal development.

Throughout the school from Reception to Year 6, pupils make satisfactory progress to reach average standards overall. This is a result of satisfactory teaching and an adequate curriculum. Standards in English are stronger in reading than in writing and the school is currently focusing on raising achievement in this area. There is more to be done, however, to increase the opportunities for pupils to practise and use the skills they have learnt in English lessons when they write in other subjects.

Following improvements over the last term in systems to check how well pupils are doing, expectations of what they can achieve have been raised. As a result, all groups throughout the school are now making satisfactory progress. Whilst these changes have improved the quality of teaching, inconsistencies remain and pupils' progress is better in some lessons and classes than others. This is because teachers do not yet use assessment information effectively enough to plan lessons that challenge all pupils, particularly the more able, to achieve well. Teachers now share learning targets in English and mathematics with pupils and help pupils understand what to do next through comments made when their work is marked. Although these recently introduced improvements have already had a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and involvement in their learning, they have yet to be used consistently well by all teachers to secure good progress across the school.

Whilst leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall, a significant strength, and the driving force behind the differences parents have noted, is the strong leadership of the headteacher. As a result, leaders at all levels, including governors, understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and just what needs to be done next to improve further. Other leaders have begun, with the headteacher's support, to use data and monitoring to check strengths and weaknesses in the areas for which they are responsible. However, these checks are not yet well established enough to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum across the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help teachers make better use of assessment information to plan lessons that always challenge pupils and extend their achievement.
- Raise standards in writing by providing more opportunities for pupils to practice and use their skills across the curriculum.

- Develop the expertise of leaders in checking how well the school is doing and ensuring new initiatives are used consistently to improve teaching and the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The achievement of pupils, including those with learning difficulties, is satisfactory. When they start school, children's skills and knowledge are broadly in line with expectations. They make satisfactory progress overall so that they are in line with national expectations by the start of Year 1. Pupils reach average standards overall in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in national tests 2006 in mathematics at Year 2 and reading at Year 6 were above average because more pupils reached the higher levels in these subjects. However, this is not the case in all subjects because lessons are not always sufficiently challenging to ensure all pupils always achieve their best. Standards in writing across the school, whilst broadly average, are weaker than in other areas. The school has already begun to tackle this. Pupils now have learning targets for their writing, though there is variation from class to class in how well they are used to raise achievement. Recent improvements to teaching, the curriculum and the use of data to track pupils' achievement mean progress in lessons, whilst varied, is satisfactory overall and sometimes better. However, whilst all teaching is at least satisfactory, inconsistencies remain and, as a result, progress across the school remains uneven. The school works hard to ensure that the high proportion of pupils joining the school throughout the year settles quickly and makes the same progress in lessons as others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. This is reflected in pupils' enjoyment, above-average attendance, positive attitudes and good behaviour. Right from the start in the Reception class, pupils quickly learn to share and help one another because of the focus on developing these skills. They get along well and help one another, as demonstrated by their readiness to welcome new pupils to the school. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and staying safe. Cultural development is satisfactory, although pupils have limited understanding of the diversity of cultures in British society. Pupils enjoy responsibility, for example, being representatives on the school council, and they take this very seriously. They are proud to have had an impact on the life of the school community by being involved in the appointment of the new headteacher, saying 'she's made a big difference'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships between pupils and adults are good and behaviour is managed well. Consequently, pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to learn. Teachers explain that, since September, considerable changes have taken place and these have had a very positive effect on the quality of their teaching and pupils' learning. Nonetheless, they are aware that some things need time to settle and become routine. Whilst teachers are increasingly using assessment information to set high expectations and plan challenging work, this is not yet found in all lessons. Consequently, work is not always adapted closely enough to pupils' capabilities, particularly for the more able. In some lessons, pupils could be challenged more and make even greater progress in their learning. Teachers' marking is inconsistent. Whilst in some classes, effective marking is linked to pupils' learning targets, in others comments are limited and it is not clear to pupils how they can improve their work. Teaching assistants contribute effectively to lessons, particularly when supporting those with learning difficulties, ensuring they make the same progress as others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of activities outside the school day, including the much-enjoyed residential visit for older pupils. There are increasing opportunities to participate in musical activities, with this term's drumming lessons a great success. These activities not only support pupils' learning, but also help to foster their positive attitudes and encourage their enthusiastic participation. A well-planned programme of personal, social and health education gives pupils a clear understanding of how to keep healthy and safe and helps to promote their good personal development. Good provision for physical education (PE) has been recognised with the Gold Activemark award.

Pupils' satisfactory progress is helping them to gain the necessary skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) in preparation for the world of work. Improvements have been made to ICT resources, including the recent purchase of laptops for classrooms, but these have yet to be used regularly to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Similarly, whilst improving writing is a focus within English lessons, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use and reinforce their skills when they write in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is a caring school where pupils' well-being is of paramount importance. Pupils and parents recognise this and it is a key factor in pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Health and safety procedures are well understood, particularly important with so many

pupils using school transport and with an on-site swimming pool. Any pupils who are at risk are quickly identified and supported well. Pupils say that they feel safe and know who to turn to, if necessary.

The academic guidance and support provided by the school is satisfactory and improving, but some inconsistencies remain. Recently developed procedures are enabling the school to track pupils' progress more carefully. However, assessment information is not used well enough in some lessons to inform teachers' planning, to set high expectations or to help pupils with the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The work of the headteacher is a significant strength of the school. She is effectively involving all staff, alongside an increasingly active governing body, in analysing data and monitoring teaching to see what works best and what needs to improve.

Consequently, most leaders are taking an increased responsibility in checking that the school is doing well enough and securing consistency of practice. Their skills in doing this have yet to develop sufficiently to improve the overall quality of provision.

Everyone is enthusiastic about the recent changes and shares a vision for a school that is improving and where every child matters. Parents acknowledge the school's increased willingness to welcome their views, with the vast majority responding positively when asked about the effectiveness of the school. Whilst there has been little time to see the outcomes of recent changes on raising achievement and standards, the school demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	2
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

Thank you for talking to us and showing us your work when we visited your school. We think your school is giving you a satisfactory education that helps you to make expected progress as you move through the school. We are pleased to hear that you like school and that the grown-ups are kind and look after you well. You also have a good understanding of how to look after yourselves through keeping safe, eating healthily and taking plenty of exercise. We were happy to hear that there are plenty of things for you to take part in, such as the drumming lessons and different clubs. We were particularly interested to hear about how you helped to choose your new headteacher and how you feel things have improved since she arrived. We think you are good at welcoming new friends to your school, are polite to adults and behave well.

In order to make your learning even better, we have asked the adults at your school to

- Make sure that all your lessons always stretch you to do your very best.
- Make sure that you get better in your writing by having lots of opportunities to write in other subjects.
- Keep checking exactly what the school does best and what could be better so that you all learn as well as you possibly can.