



Stathern Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119952
Local Authority Leicestershire
Inspection number 291581
Inspection date 1 November 2006
Reporting inspector Frances Gillam

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Water Lane
School category	Community		Stathern
Age range of pupils	4–10		Melton Mowbray LE14 4HT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01949 860316
Number on roll (school)	76	Fax number	01949 869 165
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Anthony Ombler
		Headteacher	Angela Wright
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Stathern is smaller than the average primary school. Almost all pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. Pupils are organised in four classes, three of which contain pupils from two year groups. Since September 2003, the Foundation Stage class has been taught by several different teachers. At the time of the inspection, children in the Foundation Stage were being taught with Year 1 pupils.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Within the school's warm and friendly environment pupils grow in confidence and do well. This is because they receive good care, guidance and support. Pupils respond to the high level of care extremely well; their behaviour is exemplary and they develop excellent working relationships with adults and with one another. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils choose to take regular exercise, to eat healthily and show respect and care for themselves and others. They make a very good contribution to their school and the wider community. They are particularly pleased with the implementation of their idea for a 'healthy food' tuck shop. The good curriculum contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of school. Activities are often exciting and pupils of all ages make very good use of the out-of-school clubs.

Predominantly good teaching ensures that the majority of pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above average by Year 5. Lessons, particularly in Years 3 to 5, spark pupils' interest, challenge them to do their best and encourage them to be involved with and talk about their learning. This leads to some rapid progress in these year groups in reading, writing and mathematics. Senior managers acknowledge that targets for pupils' performance at the end of Year 2 are not as challenging as those for Year 5 and that some inconsistencies in teaching are yet to be ironed out. These factors account for pupils' satisfactory rate of progress from the Reception Year to Year 2. Teachers of the younger year groups do not always make good use of assessment information to provide work that enables the more able pupils to do their very best. Nevertheless, the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and almost all children attain the goals for learning by the end of the Reception Year.

Leadership and management are good. Senior managers have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further development. These are shared with staff and governors and set clear direction for improvement. School self-evaluation processes are good and tease out the most important points requiring further development. This has led to improvements, for example, in pupils' achievements in reading, and reflects the school's good capacity to improve. Senior managers carry out a detailed programme to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. This provides good information to help improve lessons but senior managers are not sufficiently rigorous in ensuring that teachers have acted upon the points for improvement. This leads to the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching persisting, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 to 2.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of assessment information in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 to set challenging targets and ensure that the potentially more able pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Ensure that points for improvement in teaching are implemented fully and evaluated carefully to check for their effectiveness.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well, although their rate of progress varies from satisfactory to very good in different year groups. Children's attainment when they start school is broadly average. They make satisfactory progress and most meet the goals expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Pupils continue to make steady progress in Years 1 and 2 and, as a result, standards at the end of Year 2 are average. Standards in reading have been lower in the national tests than those in writing and mathematics but this is being dealt with successfully and standards are now rising. Targets set for pupils to achieve by Year 2 are not always high enough to ensure good progress from the Reception Year to Year 2, especially for the more able.

Challenging targets ensure that pupils in Years 3 to 5 make good progress and some more-able pupils do very well. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by Year 5 and pupils do well, based on their starting point in Year 3. Older pupils' ability to work together and their well-developed literacy and numeracy skills create a firm foundation for their future.

Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities do well. Good support and a clear focus on improvement targets ensure that these pupils build effectively on what they have done before.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school, typically commenting, 'everyone is friendly and it is such a happy place to be.' The good attendance rate reflects the pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment of school. They like the way their views are listened to and their ideas acted on. They are influential in making their school a better place. Pupils choose to lead active and healthy lifestyles. They participate in the many sporting activities on offer and make sensible choices about what they eat. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of their own and other cultures and they make a very good contribution to the community by raising substantial funds for charity and taking part in local events. Pupils behave extremely well and show a high level of care for themselves and others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception class soon settle into school and develop good attitudes towards learning. Throughout the school, teachers build well on this good start and excellent relationships between adults and pupils establish a positive climate for learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are fully involved in lessons

and activities are adapted very well to meet their needs. This leads to good achievement for these pupils and builds their confidence successfully.

Pupils often find lessons fun and this is a good incentive for them to concentrate and work hard. This also accounts for their enthusiasm to learn and their excellent behaviour in lessons. Pupils find teachers' marking and targets for improvement helpful. Older pupils refer to them regularly and this ensures that they complete work of a good standard. Some skilled teaching, particularly in the older classes, ensures that pupils have a good balance of teacher input, sharing their ideas in discussions and working with others to develop these ideas further. This prepares them well for the next stage in the lesson where they have independent tasks to do. A good balance of activities is not always provided for younger pupils and they sometimes sit for too long listening to the teacher. At times, teachers in the younger classes do not use assessment information well enough to match activities to the ability of the more able and sometimes the work is too easy for these pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A rich and varied curriculum ensures that all pupils are interested and focused well on their learning. Activities are relevant and many contribute very well to the pupils' personal development and well-being. These include an extensive range of out-of-school clubs and visits to places of interest that promotes healthy lifestyles and pupils' enjoyment of school. A carefully planned curriculum ensures that most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make good progress. At times, the activities for the more able pupils in the younger classes do not always build effectively on what they have learned before.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents rightly feel their children are safe and well cared for, and the high level of care for pupils contributes well to their personal development and well-being. It shows in the way pupils act sensibly and move safely in and around the school. Pupils say they feel safe and free from harm and that they are treated fairly. This is because staff value pupils' efforts, listen to them and act promptly on any concerns. Tracking systems provide useful information on pupils' attainment but these are not always used well enough to set challenging targets, especially for the end of Year 2. Guidance and support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities focuses carefully on their individual needs and this leads to good progress for these pupils. Older pupils like to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to get better. They say this encourages them to work hard and they enjoy the challenge.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior managers and governors have a good understanding of the school's effectiveness. They evaluate the quality of lessons regularly, analyse the school's performance accurately and track pupils' progress carefully. This ensures they identify relevant priorities for development, which focus strongly on improving pupils' achievements and securing good progress by Year 5. Action to bring about change for the better is often successful. It is evident in improvements since the last inspection and, more recently, in the improved provision for reading. The school is well placed to improve and do even better. However, some weaker aspects of teaching persist in the younger classes. This is because senior managers do not follow through lesson observations to check whether all teachers are implementing points for improvement successfully and if the action taken is proving effective. This school provides good value for money.

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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?	2
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	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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 making the inspection team so welcome when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed talking with you and seeing all the exciting things you were doing.

What a good school you have! You told us it was a happy place to be and we could certainly see this from all your smiling faces. Many of you do well and standards are above average by the time you leave in Year 5. You told us your teachers and other adults take good care of you and we agree. All the adults treat you kindly and make sure you are safe and free from harm. You behave extremely well and you do a very good job of helping to improve your school. You are healthy and fit. You make good use of the 'healthy food' tuck shop and eat plenty of fruit and get lots of exercise. The curriculum is exciting, with many interesting activities for you to do, and you make very good use of out-of-school clubs.

Many of you say that your lessons are exciting. Your teachers do a good job and make sure activities are fun and interesting. You like knowing how well you are doing and you have some good information to help you to do even better in your work. This is helping you to become good readers, writers and mathematicians but some of you, mainly in Classes 1 and 2, could learn a bit more quickly. You can all help by trying extra hard with your work and making sure you always try your very best.

The people in charge of your school and your teachers make good decisions about how to help you and we have asked them to set some really challenging targets and to make sure you all do your best. We have also suggested that ideas for making lessons even better need to be followed through to make sure that they are really making a difference to the way you learn.