



Studfall Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121809
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292225
Inspection dates 16–17 January 2007
Reporting inspector Peter Callow

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rowlett Road
School category	Community		Corby
Age range of pupils	7–11		NN17 2BT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01536 202621
Number on roll (school)	416	Fax number	01536 202621
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rena Glitheroe
		Headteacher	Louise McGeachie / Kim Kirchin
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This urban junior school has designated provision to support pupils with statements of special educational need. The majority have severe learning difficulties (SLD), moderate learning difficulties (MLD) or autism. One tenth of all pupils in the school are entitled to this provision. Most enter during Year 3 and Year 4 from mainstream schools which are unable to meet the special needs of these pupils. Over one third of all pupils have learning difficulties or statements of special educational need, which is significantly higher than average. Over two thirds come from areas where there is a higher-than-average level of deprivation. Over one quarter of the teaching staff have changed in the last two years, including the longstanding headteacher. Two headteachers were appointed to lead the school from September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The strong and cohesive leadership of the two headteachers is a significant factor in the overall effectiveness of the school being good. It has enabled the school to improve since it was last inspected and to have good capacity to improve further. Good leadership and management at all levels ensure that the good personal development and well-being of pupils has high priority. One parent commented, 'The school is well led, takes the views of parents and the community on board, but is centrally focused on the whole child.' The care, guidance and support given to all pupils are good. The pastoral care is outstanding because Studfall Junior School is a school where every child really does matter. Its mission statement of 'Valuing All' is evident on a daily basis because it is a truly inclusive school. Pupils with learning difficulties and statements of special educational need work alongside pupils of all abilities and have the same good curriculum that others have. Practical activities which meet the needs of each individual and effective support from adults and other pupils enable these pupils in particular to make good progress. As one parent said, 'I can't believe the difference in him since he started at this school; he has confidence and a smile on his face.' Pupils enter the school at the start of Year 3 with standards which are broadly average. However, because a significant number of pupils with statements of special educational need join later on, standards overall in the lower part of the school are below average. The good progress of pupils of all abilities, as they move up through the school, results in broadly average standards overall at the end of Year 6. If the national test results for pupils with statements of special educational need are not included, standards are above average in English and science. The achievement of all pupils is good because good teaching and learning happen in nearly every lesson. Teachers plan interesting tasks which generally build very effectively on what pupils already know. This is done particularly well in writing, where standards have improved significantly in the last two years. Pupils do not make quite so much progress in mathematics because, in a small number of lessons, the work is not challenging enough, particularly for those of average ability. In addition, not all of the marking helps pupils to understand how they can improve. The school is aware of the need to give pupils regular opportunities to be more involved in the assessment of their own progress in all subjects so that they can take greater responsibility for their learning. A number of different visitors to the school and a very wide range of clubs help to develop pupils' skills and interests and enjoyment of school. The music and information and communication technology (ICT) clubs, for example, offer excellent experiences to pupils to learn how to write a musical score to support their drama activities, and to make a pop video. The school's encouragement for pupils to have a healthy lifestyle, especially through participation in many sporting activities, means that this aspect of their development is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that work is sufficiently challenging for all levels of pupils' ability and that marking helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve.

- Increase the opportunities for pupils to be involved in the assessment of their own progress so that they become more independent in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievement of all groups of pupils throughout the school is good. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with statements of special educational need achieve particularly well. Pupils join at the start of Year 3 from the partner infant school with standards which are broadly average. However, because a significant number of pupils with statements of special educational need enter later in Year 3 and during Year 4, standards overall are below average in the lower part of the school. The vast majority of pupils of different abilities make good progress as they move up through the school so that standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. If the national test results for pupils with statements of special educational need are not included, standards for the last two years have been above average in English and science. Pupils make good progress in their writing. Standards are lower in mathematics than in English and science because a few pupils in each class, particularly those of average ability, do not make as much progress as they might.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are a strength of the school because of very good relationships between everyone. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils' behaviour is always good and, for some, it is often exemplary. Pupils feel safe and develop a keen sense of responsibility for others, particularly those who find learning difficult. They contribute well to the wider community by raising large sums of money for charity and by practical activities such as planting trees and bulbs at a local hospice. Pupils are keen to say how much they enjoy school, with one pupil remarking, 'This is a good place to be.' As a result of recent strategies, pupils' attendance has improved so that it is broadly average, but the school is aware of the need to continue to work hard with the few families where attendance is less than satisfactory. The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to share and reflect on their experiences and feelings. This helps to ensure that their spiritual, moral, social, emotional and cultural development is good in all respects and that pupils have a growing understanding of other faiths and cultures in particular. Although pupils' skills in numeracy are not developing quite as quickly as in other areas, life skills such as working in a team and taking responsibility are developing well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Consistently good quality teaching and the good attitudes of pupils to their work enable nearly all pupils to make good progress. Adults use praise well to motivate pupils. Lessons move at a good pace, with teachers using careful questioning to assess pupils' understanding. The positive relationships between adults and pupils are a particular strength of teaching and result in pupils feeling confident to learn and to seek help when needed. Teaching assistants are valued members of the teaching team and make a significant contribution to the progress made by pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and with statements of special educational need. Pupils, particularly those of average ability, do not consistently make the progress of which they are capable in mathematics. This is because the tasks planned for them, based on their previous learning, are not always sufficiently challenging. While marking is used well in literacy to indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve, this is not always the case in mathematics. There are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to make their own assessments of progress which would help them to become more independent in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A wide range of practical tasks enables all pupils, and particularly those with learning difficulties and with statements of special educational need, to be interested and involved in their work and to make good progress. Carefully planned topics broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world, different cultures and the arts. Good links are made across the subjects, helping especially to develop pupils' skills in writing. ICT is sometimes used well to support learning and teaching, but there aren't yet enough opportunities for pupils to make full use of it in different subjects of the curriculum. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good overall, with Year 6 pupils benefiting from workshops such as those on solvent abuse. This type of event means that the curriculum to help pupils to lead safe and healthy lives is outstanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has an excellent partnership with a range of outside agencies, as well as parents, which ensures the outstanding care and good support for all pupils, including those most at risk. Health, safety and well-being are high priorities and rigorous procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. Pupils confidently express their opinions and say that they feel safe and very well cared for. They know they have adults to talk to about any worries. There are good systems in place for target setting, and targets to help pupils improve their work are very much in evidence in classrooms and in their

books, particularly in literacy. Pupils' awareness and understanding of these targets are sometimes limited and the school has rightly identified this as an area for development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteachers have built up a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their detailed and precise self-evaluation makes good use of an excellent analysis of assessments of pupils' progress. Rigorous systems for checking on the performance of the school are enabling them to measure the impact of improvement strategies, such as those to raise standards in mathematics. The headteachers' development of a new team of senior managers reflects their commitment to a joint approach to leadership. They recognise that, in order to help raise standards further, these leaders now need to develop their use of the increased information available about pupils' progress. The vast majority of all parents express extremely positive views about the school, praising in particular the good communication, how pupils are treated as individuals and how they are listened to in helping the school to become even better. Despite a number of recent changes on the governing body, it works very effectively under good leadership. Governors have supportive links with staff and pupils and are developing their role in the school's self-evaluation.

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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?	1
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	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?	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

We enjoyed visiting your school recently and are grateful to you all for being so friendly and polite. It was very clear that you go to an extremely caring school where you go out of your way to look after each other, especially those who find learning difficult. You go to a good school and everyone, including the adults, was keen to tell us how much they enjoy going to it. You have good relationships with all the staff, and teachers make a real effort to find interesting ways of helping you to learn. Many of you talked to us about all the clubs that are on offer and we were impressed at some of the things that you achieve in these activities. We were also impressed at how knowledgeable you are about how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils of different abilities make good progress in their work. This is because the teaching is good and nearly all of your activities are based well on what you already know. For some of you in mathematics, there is not quite enough challenge to help you make the progress of which you are capable. We have asked your teachers to make sure this happens and also that when they mark your work they explain what you need to do to improve. We want you to take more responsibility for your own learning, thinking carefully about your targets but also assessing how much progress you have made and how you could do better. We have asked your teachers to make sure that they give you opportunities to do this, but you can help by asking yourself at the end of each lesson what you have learned and what else you could do to improve your work. Your two headteachers, with the support of all the staff and governors, check carefully to see how much progress each of you makes and how well the school is doing. As a result of your headteachers doing this so thoroughly, your school has continued to improve since it was last inspected. We are sure that with the good attitudes and responsibility that you show, it will improve even further.