



# Standens Barn Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 121935  
**Local Authority** Northamptonshire  
**Inspection number** 292268  
**Inspection dates** 7–8 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Alison Grainger

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Flaxwell Court
<b>School category</b>	Community		Standens Barn
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Northampton NN3 9EH
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 413151
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	283	<b>Fax number</b>	01604 413156
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Nigel Dickens
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Robyn Wisbey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 March 2001		

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<b>Age group</b> 4–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 7–8 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 292268
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school draws its pupils from the surrounding estate of mixed housing. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average. When children enter the Reception Year, their attainment is slightly below the level expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and also in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

Since the last inspection, schools in Northampton have been reorganised. As a result, the school has changed from being a lower school to a primary school with pupils in Years 5 and 6. There have been some recent changes in teaching staff, including within the senior team, and major building work is currently taking place.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate and it does not provide value for money. This is the case even though parents are pleased with many features of the school, such as the quality of care and pupils' behaviour, and pupils enjoy being there. The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate and insufficiently matched to pupils' differing needs. As a result, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.

Overall progress since the last inspection has been acceptable in some aspects but overall is inadequate. The school has successfully introduced good provision for pupils in Years 5 and 6. It now takes the required action to rectify the present significant weaknesses but there is much to do. In particular, it is starting to spread the good practice established in Years 5 and 6 to other years. Senior staff are starting to improve teaching in the year groups and classes in which there are weaknesses. There has, for example, been recent important action to bring about improvement in the approach to the teaching of reading.

Standards are average when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Reception Year and most reach the standards expected for their age. Their progress through Years 1 to 4 is too inconsistent and too many underachieve. This is most evident in Years 1 and 2 where progress is particularly weak in writing and mathematics and standards are also too low in reading. In Years 3 and 4 many pupils do not do well enough in writing and a significant number also underachieve in mathematics.

The success of the school's efforts in providing for pupils in Years 5 and 6 is evident in the good teaching and the rapid progress that many make, leading to the average standards when they leave. In these years, teaching is effective in meeting the different needs of pupils. Major strides forward are made by pupils whose attainment has previously been lower than expected for their age.

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are some strengths in, for example, enrichment of day-by-day lessons through activities such as clubs, visitors, special days and visits. Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. They help pupils to feel safe at school and, together with the curriculum, help them to develop the expected awareness of how to keep fit and healthy. The school ensures that pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall and that behaviour and relationships are good. The quality of guidance to pupils about how to improve their work, however, is not good enough. Although there are examples of good practice, it is too patchy and reflects the inconsistencies in teaching.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior leaders and governors have recognised that there are weaknesses to be rectified in specific year groups and are now taking some of the right action. There is a shared commitment to improvement among the staff. The positive action that is starting to have an impact and the recent effective development of provision for pupils in Years 5 and 6 indicate that the school has an acceptable capacity to improve. Nevertheless, the school recognises that it must rapidly increase the rigour with which provision, particularly teaching, is evaluated and follow-up action is taken.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve pupils' progress in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 4.
- Improve teaching and, in particular, ensure that it is closely matched to pupils' differing needs.
- Give clear guidance to pupils about how to improve their work.
- Improve the monitoring of teaching and take quick action to improve provision.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Standards are average at the end of Year 6. In both 2005 and 2006, pupils did well in the national tests in science. A significant number of pupils whose starting points are below the expected level make substantial gains in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Children in the Reception Year make satisfactory progress and most are at the level expected for their age by the time they move to Year 1.

Even though pupils make a reasonable start and do well during their last two years, achievement is inadequate. Too many pupils in Years 1 and 2 in particular, and also in Years 3 and 4, make insufficient progress and work below their capabilities. The most recent test results for pupils at the end of Year 2 show standards as significantly below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. Currently writing and mathematics are the main areas of weakness in Years 1 to 4.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Strengths in moral and social development are evident in pupils' good behaviour and in how well they get on with each other and with the adults in school. Although pupils have positive attitudes and are keen to learn, many take too little care with the presentation of their work. Pupils' acquisition of the skills necessary for the world of work is inadequate in several year groups because of the poor basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Pupils' awareness of how to keep fit, healthy and safe is at the level expected. They know the importance of a balanced diet and of observing safe practices in practical lessons. Pupils' contribution to the wider community is satisfactory. Responsibilities

as members of the school council or as friendship monitors are undertaken conscientiously.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 4

Inadequate teaching is the main cause of pupils' underachievement. In Years 1 to 4, teachers' expectations of pupils are too low and teaching is not well matched to pupils' needs. This is the case with activities set in lessons and questioning. Often, questions are undemanding or pitched only at the middle ability pupils.

Even though teaching is inadequate overall in Years 1 to 4, there are some positive features. Relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and pupils' ideas are valued, which encourages pupils to contribute. Instructions and explanations are clear and activities are usually well organised.

Whilst teaching moves children's learning on at a steady pace in the Reception Year, there is not always enough challenge for the most capable ones. In Years 5 and 6, expectations are high. In these year groups teaching challenges pupils well, irrespective of their starting points or capabilities.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

In the Reception Year, all areas of learning are covered satisfactorily. There is good individual support for early reading and also effective development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

In Years 1 to 6 all the required subjects are taught. Improvements have been made in provision for information and communication technology. The provision of mathematics to three classes based on ability in Years 5 and 6 has contributed to the good progress made there. This arrangement has been extended to Years 3 and 4 this term where it is starting to improve the progress of some pupils. More action is required to meet the needs of the significant number of lower-attaining pupils. In Years 1 to 4 too few opportunities are provided for writing across the different subjects and this contributes to poor progress in this area.

'Hands on' experiences, enjoyed by pupils, help them to do well in science by the end of Year 6. Pupils also respond enthusiastically to the good range of activities additional to day-by-day lessons in, for example, sports and music, and residential experiences in Years 3 to 6.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Members of the school council say teachers make them feel that 'school is a safe place'. Considerable efforts have been made to ensure pupils' safety during a period of major building works. Pupils value the 'bullying bag' hanging on the headteacher's door where they can leave notes bringing any concerns to her attention. Pupils are confident that they have an adult to turn to should the need arise.

Pupils are helped to make sensible choices about how to have a healthy lifestyle and healthy eating is encouraged but not always as consistently as it should be, for example, when sweets are provided as rewards. Other rewards are more appropriate, for example certificates, house points and the attendance trophy.

Guidance to pupils about how they can improve their school work is too patchy and is inadequate overall. In Years 3 and 4, for example, many pupils are unsure of what they should do to improve their writing. Not all teachers use marking as they should to support pupils' progress, although there are some examples of good practice.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior staff and governors have demonstrated that they are capable of bringing about effective change. This is evident in the good provision that has been developed for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

Some positive action has already been taken to tackle weaknesses in Years 1 to 4. These include spreading good practice from Years 5 and 6 to Years 3 and 4, such as in the grouping of pupils for mathematics and in the tracking and analysis of pupils' progress. The recently appointed deputy headteacher and English subject leader, has already taken action to rectify a fall in reading standards in Years 1 and 2. She is also using her skills as a leading literacy teacher for the local authority to take forward the teaching of writing. The headteacher and deputy head are rightly focusing on improving teaching and are working closely with the teaching teams in Years 1 to 4.

The school recognises that the effect of teaching on learning needs to be better and that, to achieve this, the monitoring of teaching also requires improvement. These developments are necessary to ensure that the school meets all pupils' needs effectively.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	4
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you. You were very welcoming and friendly. You behave well, are very polite and get on well with each other. We are pleased that you enjoy school, like your teachers and feel safe at school.

We saw that you have some good opportunities to do activities in addition to your usual lessons. We hope that the children in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 enjoyed watching the theatre group who visited the school.

You told us that the teachers are approachable and have some good ways of looking after you. For example, the School Council told us how much you appreciate the 'bullying bag' on your headteacher's door.

We looked carefully at how well you make progress as you move up through the school. We found that the children in the Reception Year make steady progress. Those of you who are in Years 5 and 6 make good progress. You reach the standards expected for your age by the time you leave in Year 6. In the other years, a lot of you could be making more progress. This means that, although you like school, the school does not make sure that you all learn enough in all years.

We have asked the school to improve the teaching so that you all make as much progress as you can. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that they give you clear guidance about how you can improve your work. This will help you take more responsibility for your learning. The headteacher and her senior staff will keep checking on how well the teaching is helping you to learn.

Your school is not doing as well as it should be. All the adults in your school are going to be working hard together to improve the school. Other inspectors will visit to see how they are getting on.

You can help by making sure that you always do your best and that your work is neat and tidy. Thank you once again for all your help.