

# Spratton Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121991
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	295424
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Driscoll

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 category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	97
<b>School</b>	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Enid Jarvis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Darren Sibley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 January 2006
<b>School address</b>	School Road Spratton Northampton NN6 8HY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01604 846530
<b>Fax number</b>	01604 847761

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Spratton is a small rural primary school. All pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is above average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. When last inspected, the school was not performing well enough and given a Notice to Improve. The headteacher was, through sickness, absent for this inspection and two other classes were covered by temporary teachers.

## 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, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education, and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

Pupils underachieve at the school. They join with standards that are above average, and make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. By the time they leave Year 6 their standards have fallen to average and they have not made enough progress in the skills they will need for later life. The main cause of the underachievement in English and mathematics is inadequate teaching that fails to pitch work at the right level for middle and higher ability pupils. In science, pupils underachieve because the inadequate curriculum does not ensure that enough time is allowed to cover topics in sufficient depth.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils attend regularly and come to school keen to learn. However, their enthusiasm diminishes when teaching is not good enough. Procedures to ensure that pupils are safe and secure in school are strong. However, the overall quality of care, guidance and support is reduced to an inadequate level by poor academic guidance and weaknesses in the tracking of pupils' progress as they move through the school.

The school's performance has declined significantly since it was last inspected as a result of inadequate leadership and management. Actions taken have not proved effective because they were taken too late or they have not been targeted at the most appropriate areas. The school's evaluation of its own performance is inaccurate. The systems for checking on the quality of teaching fail to identify the most important weaknesses and provide an over generous view of provision. There have been some signs of improvement in recent weeks, but these improvements are not secure. Governors are now much more challenging and demanding of answers, but too much management is the sole responsibility of the headteacher.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Carry out more rigorous and detailed monitoring of teaching in order to identify exactly what teachers need to do to improve.
- Ensure that the work given to middle and higher ability pupils in English and mathematics is sufficiently challenging.
- Ensure that systems for tracking pupils' progress are complete and supply information that is used to provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve.
- Ensure the curriculum provides sufficient coverage of science topics.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

Pupils underachieve at the school despite their satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. Standards in English, mathematics and science, as seen in books and lessons, are currently average, which is too low, given pupils' standards on joining the school. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make satisfactory progress, but middle and higher ability pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. The results of recent tests, set and marked

by the school, show some encouraging signs of improvement, but still not enough for progress to be satisfactory.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are keen to learn and their attendance is above average. Their enthusiasm tends to wane, however, as they get older. Higher ability pupils, in particular, become bored in lessons when they find the work too easy or if they have to wait for others to catch up. Pupils' behaviour in lessons remains satisfactory, but pupils start to drift off task and chat quietly to one another when the work does not interest them.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are polite to visitors and to other adults. They understand the differences between right and wrong. Some pupils have expressed concerns about bullying, but this often stems from a misunderstanding of the difference between bullying and simply not being friends with one another. Pupils play a good role in the local community, taking part in many events. Their role in the school community is more limited.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

Teaching is typified by slow lessons that fail to challenge the majority of pupils, especially in English and mathematics. Too often the work is not pitched at the right level for the ability of the pupils. Work that is set for the whole class is suitable for the lower ability pupils but others find it too easy. Teaching assistants are used appropriately to support those with learning difficulties or disabilities so such pupils make better progress than others.

The pace of lessons is too slow for the majority of pupils. Too much time is allocated to a single task, so pupils quickly finish and then have to wait with nothing to do until the next task is provided. Some tasks are repeated, over and over again, such as the same mental arithmetic tests. As a result, these are now a test of how quickly middle and higher ability pupils can write the answers, rather than a test of their mathematical skills.

Teachers generally make good use of the resources that are available to them. This is especially the case in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, where wall displays are used particularly well to bring topics alive or illustrate exactly what the teaching is talking about. Teaching in the Foundation Stage ensures that children are engaged by interesting and stimulating activities.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 4**

The curriculum ensures that pupils understand how to lead healthy and safe lifestyles. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in activities in the local community, often based around the strong links with the church. Opportunities to take responsibility in the school community are more limited. A good range of trips allows pupils to learn about other cultures and how to get on with one another. Despite limited outdoor facilities, the curriculum in the Foundation Stage provides a good blend of activities that ensure that children make satisfactory progress.

The academic curriculum has a major weakness. Pupils are not covering all the topics that they should in science, or they are not covered in sufficient depth to ensure that pupils can develop an adequate understanding of the topics.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 4**

Child protection matters are taken very seriously and statutory checks carried out rigorously. Proper regard is paid to risk and safety. The school's managers have carried out detailed risk assessments of the building work in the playground, for example, and sensibly altered routines for play so that pupils remain safe.

There are significant weaknesses in the way that pupils' progress is tracked. Pupils are assessed every half term in English and mathematics, which is starting to build up a picture of how well they are doing. However, the progress of pupils in Year 1 is not tracked during the year, so managers do not know how well pupils are achieving. There are no systems in place to check on pupils' progress in science throughout the school, so underachievement has gone undetected. The weaknesses in checking pupils' progress mean that teachers are unable to give adequate advice on how pupils can improve their work in science. Furthermore, the guidance in English and mathematics is not good enough. Marking of work fails to pick up basic errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, whilst work of poor quality is described as 'very good'. In lessons, work is not checked carefully enough. In one lesson, for example, pupils were given a more difficult worksheet as soon as they had completed the first, irrespective of whether or not it had been completed correctly. Pupils' progress towards their targets is not assessed sufficiently frequently, so they are left with targets that they exceeded several weeks previously.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

Pupils were found to be underachieving in English at the last inspection. Since then, achievement in mathematics and science has fallen to a similarly inadequate level. The school's managers were slow to take action in some key areas. A sufficiently detailed and frequent system for tracking pupils' progress, for example, only started in September 2006. Pupils' achievement in science has not been identified as an area that needs improving, so no actions have been taken or are planned for the future.

The way that the quality of teaching is checked provides an over generous view of its quality. Too much emphasis is placed upon totting up strengths and weaknesses in teaching, without considering their outcomes. The result is that teachers are told that their lessons are satisfactory or good when they clearly have major weaknesses. The same is true when checking the work in pupils' books. A lack of challenge may be identified but the work evaluated as 'satisfactory'.

There have been some encouraging signs of improvement in recent weeks. Governors, in particular, are asking tougher questions and generally taking a more robust approach in their role of being a critical friend. An assistant headteacher was appointed in January 2007 which has started to ease the heavy burden of management undertaken almost entirely by the headteacher.

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## Annex A

## 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	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
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	3

### 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	3
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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>	4
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	4

<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.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
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?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for helping us when we visited your school. You were very polite when talking to us. Unfortunately we found that many of you are not learning enough in lessons. You clearly enjoy coming to school and do so whenever you can. However, you get bored when the work is too easy or if you have to wait for others to finish. To put things right, we have asked your teachers to make sure you are always given work that is hard enough for you in English and mathematics, and making sure you cover all the topics you need to in science. You can help too, by always concentrating on your work and not chatting to others.

The building work on the playground has caused a few problems recently. The people who run the school have done a good job in making sure that you do not come to any harm during playtime. This is because they have good ways of checking that you only do things that are safe. You now have targets that you have to reach in some of your subjects. Some of you have met these targets and have not been given new ones. So, we have asked the people who run the school to make sure they know how well you are doing in English, mathematics and science, in order that the teachers can give you better advice on what you need to do to improve your work.

When inspectors last visited your school, they found that it wasn't giving you a good enough education, but they thought it would get better. There are some signs that things have got a bit better in the last few weeks, but some of the most important things that need to be put right have not been spotted by the people who run the school. Because of this, we have asked them to be more careful when they check what teachers are doing and how well you are learning. Other inspectors will be visiting your school regularly to check on the progress being made.

With all best wishes for your future.