

Stoke Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103679
Local Authority	Coventry
Inspection number	308383
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	459
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jerry Murland
Headteacher	Helen Tressler
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2003
School address	Briton Road Coventry CV2 4LF
Telephone number	02476 451724
Fax number	02476 431209

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Stoke Primary is a larger than average primary school situated in a residential area of north-east Coventry. Within the school premises, there is a before- and after-school club. The proportion of pupils in receipt of free school meals is above the national average, as is the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups.

Since the previous inspection in 2003, there have been a number of senior staff changes. The governors appointed a new headteacher in September 2005 and a new deputy headteacher in January 2007.

The out-of-school club was inspected by a childcare inspector at the same time as this inspection and is reported on separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory school is improving and has some good features. While leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall, the headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership. They are determined to continue improving all aspects of pupils' performance. Together they use information about pupils' progress to accurately evaluate the work of the school, set appropriate improvement priorities and implement actions to raise attainment and improve rates of progress. The role of senior staff is developing satisfactorily. The headteacher is continuing to empower them by giving them a more prominent role in monitoring and evaluation. For instance, she has worked with senior staff to monitor pupils' work and teachers' planning to identify staff training needs.

When children start in the Nursery, their performance is below that normally expected. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of good provision and teaching. The school's assessment information shows that while pupils between Years 1 to 6 now make satisfactory progress, the rate of progress is accelerating. In 2006, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were significantly below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the same year, standards were significantly below average in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. The progress that pupils made between Year 3 and 6 was also significantly below average in both English and mathematics. In response to these low standards and slow rates of progress, the school introduced a system for setting individual targets for pupils and regularly checking progress against these targets. The school also increased the opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills and, with the support of the Local Authority, provided staff with training to help them better meet the needs of the children. These actions had a positive impact on the most recent teacher and national assessments. In 2007, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics improved at Key Stage 1. The progress that Year 6 pupils made also improved. Their progress in English was good, and was satisfactory in mathematics and science. Pupils reached average standards at the end of both key stages.

The school is aware that more needs to be done to ensure rates of progress are now consistently good or better in all year groups and in all subjects. The recent impact of the school's actions and the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation demonstrate its good capacity to improve further.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Participation in an Intensive Support Programme to raise attainment and improve the quality of teaching has led to an increase in the proportion of good teaching. The progress that pupils make slows when teachers do not use information from their good assessment procedures to ensure activities match pupils' stages of learning. Too often, work does not sufficiently challenge pupils, particularly the more able. On the other hand, progress accelerates when pupils have the opportunity to independently record their ideas and take part in activities that challenge their thinking. Pupils also learn well when teachers plan tasks that capture their imagination and enable them to develop further their basic skills. Some teachers are beginning to make greater links between subjects to enhance pupils' enjoyment of learning. For example, Years 3 pupils' recent visit to Lunt Fort not only enhanced understanding of Roman times, it generated interesting and valuable work in art, writing and information and communication technology (ICT). This good practice is inconsistent and the currently satisfactory curriculum does not include sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and mathematical skills through creative and imaginative activities.

The pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory, with good features, as is the quality of care, guidance and support. The school looks after its pupils well and pupils know well how to keep themselves safe. Parents are positive about the school's reward system because it promotes good behaviour. 'The rewards the children receive both individually and as a class or year group are always eagerly fought for,' stated one parent. Most parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire shared this view. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community, for example, supporting the local Homeless Shelter through their Harvest Festival.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Teachers' clear knowledge of the needs of this age group is evident in the well-planned curriculum, effective procedures to monitor and assess progress, and the stimulating outdoor activity area. Children make good gains in all areas of learning because of good provision. From levels on entry to Nursery that are below those expected for their age, particularly in aspects of communication skills and mathematical development, pupils enter Year 1 with levels of attainment that broadly match those expected for their age. Parents appreciate the positive start their children receive. One parent enthused, 'Every experience I have had of Nursery has been positive.' As soon as they start in school, children are given an effective grounding in their personal development. As a result of a well-structured induction programme they quickly settle into day-to-day routines. Consequently, children quickly form valuable relationships with friends and grown-ups, and develop an understanding of right and wrong, and of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Such values and attitudes fostered in the early years set the pattern for the rest of their time at Stoke Primary. Children benefit from a wide range of interesting and purposeful activities in all areas of learning. Such tasks provide a good balance between teacher-led activities and those the children choose for themselves. However, there is room for improvement in the challenge for higher attainers. The many opportunities to develop and extend children's language are a marked feature of the good practice observed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate the rate of progress for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics by making better use of information from assessment and increasing the level of challenge.
- Ensure that teaching and learning throughout the school is consistently good and better.
- Extend the opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to develop their literacy and mathematical skills through creative and imaginative activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with standards that are below expected levels. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with broadly average standards. The 2007 Year 2 teacher assessments show that pupils made satisfactory progress and reached national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. These assessments represent an improvement from the previous year. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 2. Attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly average by the time pupils leave the school. The most recent Year 6 test results for English and mathematics show a marked recovery in pupils' progress, following underperformance in 2006. The improvements in both key stages are a result of positive developments in monitoring pupils' progress, target setting,

and training and support for teachers. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils are friendly, well mannered and polite. Behaviour is good, both in classrooms and around the school. Attendance continues to be below the national average, despite many initiatives introduced by the school. The school describes itself as inclusive, and this is borne out by the rarity of exclusions. The pupils make a good contribution to their community, with the School Council playing an active part in gaining improvements to the school; for example, it has been instrumental in getting new play equipment and is currently helping to design new playground markings. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle, and are aware of the school lunches now being healthier. Pupils' social and moral development is good. They are aware of what is right and wrong, respond well to the school rules, and are tolerant of one another. Spiritual and cultural education is less well developed. Pupils' key skills in literacy and numeracy prepare them satisfactorily for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and improving. Sound subject knowledge underpins a consistent approach to planning. Such features, together with clear explanations at the start of lessons, result in pupils' enthusiastic participation in learning. The pace of learning slows when too much time is spent giving overlong introductions, leaving too little time for active learning in lessons. In most instances, teachers' perceptive questioning helps pupils clarify their thinking and consider their responses carefully. There are times, though, when questions are not sufficiently well focused to support learning. Teachers often use interactive whiteboards well to provide an effective visual stimulus for learning. Such was the case when it was used to good advantage to support Year 5's understanding of the features of instructional writing. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and behaviour. However, their time is not always used well in the whole-class introductions to lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A good range of visits and an appropriate number of out-of-class activities enhance the broad and balanced curriculum. The recent introduction of French to Year 6 pupils has further improved provision. While teachers give an appropriate focus to developing pupils' basic literacy and mathematical skills, pupils are not yet given sufficient opportunities to develop these skills, especially through independent writing activities. All too often, writing activities in other subjects are restricted to words or phrases on worksheets. Pupils enjoy school, especially the opportunity to take part in a range of sporting activities. The enthusiasm with which pupils talk about ICT and sporting activities reflects the good provision made by the school for these subjects. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE), supported by residential visits and work relating to gaining 'Healthy School' status, contributes well to pupils' personal development. In addition to satisfactory support given to pupils with

learning difficulties and/or difficulties and those at early stages of learning English, the school is developing the provision for pupils identified as gifted and talented.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel very safe and secure and are confident that teachers will respond if any problems arise. Effective safeguarding and health and safety procedures are in place. The quality of academic guidance is satisfactory. The guidance given to pupils to help them reach their targets, for example, through teachers marking, is variable between classes and between subjects. The school identifies pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who learn English as an additional language at an early stage. This, through suitable intervention and support, enables them to make progress at the same rate as other pupils. Good links are in place with other professionals and services to ensure the care and welfare of the most vulnerable pupils. The school keeps parents well informed through the recently introduced regular newsletters and the school website. However, a minority of parents expressed the view that the school does not always keep them well informed, or seek their views. The school has well-judged plans to improve communication with parents. These include introducing a Home/School Liaison Diary next term.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher leads the school well. The deputy headteacher supports her effectively. Together they place a high emphasis on accelerating the progress that pupils make and the standards they reach. This has helped to raise the staff's expectations of the pupils' capabilities. Other senior staff, teachers and support staff provide sound support. Although the headteacher has improved the target-setting process by setting challenging targets with the staff, the use of these targets with the pupils is varied. Consequently, progress is satisfactory rather than good. The school improvement plan accurately identifies what the school needs to do to improve; however, it does not make sufficient reference to pupils' progress targets. The chair of governors provides good support. He is working well with other governors to help them fulfil their roles and responsibilities. As a result, governors now provide satisfactory support for the school and are increasingly challenging and holding it to account for standards and the progress made by pupils.

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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	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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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

Annex A

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

9 November 2007

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Stoke Primary School, Coventry West Midlands CV2 4LF

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work. You told us how much you enjoy visiting different places, taking part in a range of sports activities and using computers to help you learn. Your school council works hard to make things even better, like getting more games to use at playtime.

We decided that Stoke Primary is a satisfactory school and found that it has some good features. We enjoyed visiting your lessons. It was good to see many of you behaving well and listening carefully to the teachers and to each other. We were pleased to see how much your work has improved during the past year, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. Your headteacher, teachers and all the adults who work with you take good care of you and make sure that you are safe.

We have asked Mrs Tressler, the staff and governing body to help you make even faster progress so that you learn as well as you can in reading, writing and mathematics. We have also asked the teachers to share all the good ways that they can make your lessons even more interesting when they are teaching you reading, writing and mathematics. We hope you will do all you can to help your teachers improve your school.

We enjoyed our time at your school and we would like to wish the adults who work with you, the governors and you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Usha Devi Her Majesty's Inspector



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Her Majesty's Inspector