

# Stalyhill Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106189
<b>Local Authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	309048
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Colin Smith

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	233
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Cochran
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr I Johnson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	Hereford Way Mottram Old Road Stalybridge Cheshire SK15 2TD
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 3384290
<b>Fax number</b>	0

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is average in size and mainly serves an advantaged community. Approximately one fifth of the pupils live outside the immediate area. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number are Pakistani, Indian, other heritage or from mixed backgrounds. None of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. An independently organised before and after school club operates on the infant school site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Stalyhill Juniors is a satisfactory school that has a long-standing tradition of success. In 2006 pupils' achievement was particularly good and standards were high in all subjects. Shortly after this, the school entered a difficult period when posts of responsibility could not be agreed. The resultant lack of subject leadership meant that aspects of the school's work were not checked sufficiently. Inconsistencies crept into teaching which subsequently affected pupils' progress. Results in national tests in 2007 suggest the pupils made satisfactory progress. Standards were still significantly above average but not as high as in 2006. Although standards remain above average overall, many pupils entered school with above average or even higher attainment. This indicates that pupils' achievement is satisfactory and not good as the school believes.

Following discussions with governors, a management plan has been formulated to raise pupils' achievement to its former good levels. Pupils' progress is being tracked to ensure an upward direction and additional support is being provided where it is needed. Consequently, pupils' progress is on the increase, indicating that the school has a satisfactory capacity for improvement. The school's current effectiveness and the value for money it provides are also satisfactory. Throughout the unsettled period, the school continued to offer a good level of care, support and guidance to its pupils to ensure that they were safe and secure. Their excellent attendance, good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning have all been sustained. Similarly, the school's links with health professionals have remained strong to ensure that pupils who experience difficulties are helped to overcome them. Parents recognise these qualities and are largely supportive of the school, though some would like more after-school activities to be provided for their children.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching has several good features and the climate for learning in lessons is always good. However, the level of challenge provided for the more able pupils, and the extent to which pupils' work is marked constructively and targets are set to help them to improve, are not equally well established in all classes. These inconsistencies do not help pupils to learn as smoothly as they might as they move through school. The curriculum provided is also satisfactory. Pupils' learning is enriched well through topics, visits, information and communication technology (ICT) and artwork. Pupils gain good levels of knowledge and understanding from their studies but opportunities to develop enquiry, investigation and problem-solving skills are still not sufficient to ensure that all pupils become fully fledged independent learners.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and governors provide good support. The school is calm and well organised. Key leaders are working together to provide direction and purpose. That said, there remains more to do to pull staff together to check what is happening in lessons, in pupils' books and from assessments of their progress, to ensure that inconsistencies are identified and remedied. The school's self-evaluation is over-optimistic, taking its cue from past successes rather than the current picture. However, leaders are aware of what the school needs to do to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Eliminate inconsistencies in teaching to ensure that pupils learn smoothly and achieve well in every part of the school

- Ensure that all of the more able pupils fulfil their potential through a consistently high level of challenge and more opportunities to develop their enquiry, investigation and problem-solving skills
- Ensure that managers monitor and evaluate teaching and pupils' progress in all subjects to identify and eliminate any weaknesses.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall but inconsistent between classes and year groups. On the whole, pupils' progress increases in Years 5 and 6 where teaching is strongest. By end of Year 6, standards are high in science because pupils have particularly good knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and forces. However, their skills of investigation are not at the same high level. Standards in English are above average. Pupils' reading skills are very secure and many pupils become fluent and accurate writers. Standards in mathematics are broadly average but are rising. Pupils have good calculation skills but find more difficulty in using their skills to solve mathematical problems. Standards in ICT and art and design are high throughout the school. The achievement of the more able pupils is satisfactory. However, because the work provided is not of a consistently high level of challenge, they do not all fulfil their potential. The progress made by pupils who require additional support is satisfactory and improving as the provision made for them is strengthening. The achievement of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is similar to that of their peers.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils steadfastly uphold the school's motto, 'Only my best is good enough for me.' Their moral and social development is particularly good. They are polite, very well-behaved and develop trusting relationships with adults and each other. Pupils are very eager to learn and are full of enterprising ideas when encouraged to take initiative. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in the attendance figures, which are well above average. Pupils' good spiritual development is reflected in their appreciation of art, music and literature. They also have a very good appreciation of their own heritage, although only limited understanding of cultures other than their own. They have good awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles and a clear understanding of how to keep safe by avoiding dangers such as drugs, smoking and alcohol. Pupils are proud of their school and make a valuable contribution to their community as playground leaders and school councillors. They acquire good basic skills which prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Although overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory, some teaching is more effective. Pupils' behaviour is always well managed. Lessons are purposeful and pupils work hard. New topics are clearly explained and teachers make very effective use of ICT to help pupils to understand

complex ideas such as converting decimals to percentages. However, inconsistencies in teaching hamper pupils' learning. Where teaching is good, teachers use assessment effectively to provide work at just the right level to match pupils' different learning needs. In these lessons all pupils learn successfully. However, in some lessons, the tasks provided are much the same for all pupils. This means that more able ones are not always challenged sufficiently and their learning is not fully extended. There are isolated occasions when pupils who find learning difficult struggle to complete the tasks, but more often they are well supported by effective teaching assistants who help them to reach their targets. In most lessons the pace is brisk and, in some lessons, pupils are actively involved in practical learning activities such as investigating flat shapes that fold into cubes. Pupils describe these lessons as fun and they learn at a good rate. However, when pupils sit for too long listening to the teacher, their interest wanes and their learning slows.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes good opportunities for pupils to learn a foreign language, play a musical instrument and enjoy a wide range of sports, such as lacrosse. ICT is used well in the learning of many subjects. The curriculum is enriched by visits, for example to museums. Pupils' comments such as, 'I find history fascinating,' illustrate how learning outside school increases their enjoyment. Different subjects are often linked together meaningfully within topics to make learning more relevant. However, opportunities for pupils to enquire, investigate and solve problems are too limited. Pupils respond positively to the extra sporting opportunities provided by external specialists, although many would dearly like to participate in competitive sports with other schools.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Many parents justifiably describe the school as 'caring and supportive'. Safeguarding and health and safety procedures are securely in place. Risks are assessed and minimised. The school provides good pastoral support, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well provided for through detailed, personalised plans which help teaching assistants to target their support precisely. Good induction procedures help pupils to settle in quickly. Pupils' individual progress is now being tracked closely. School leaders are beginning to use the information to target specific resources to raise performance. The marking of pupils' work and the setting of targets is still not consistent between classes. Consequently, some pupils have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve than others.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher and staff provide a caring, safe and disciplined atmosphere in which pupils work diligently and acquire good personal skills. Many parents and governors greatly appreciate these traditional values. The school ensures that pupils have equal access to all activities. Community cohesion within the school is well established and leaders and governors are in the process of promoting harmonious relationships beyond the school. The newly formed school management team is providing stability and purpose in moving the school forward. A coherent

plan, concentrating on the key priorities, is now in place and new strategies are being tested, such as team teaching in Year 6, to raise achievement further. Some improvements are already evident, particularly in the provision made for pupils with learning difficulties. However, there remains more to be done to check all aspects of the work of the school, particularly within subjects, to ensure that any weaknesses or inconsistencies are identified quickly and eradicated. Governors know the school well and are centrally involved in important decision making. They are very eager to hold the school to account and they provide a good level of professional support.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## 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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

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

Inspection of Stalyhill Junior School, Stalybridge, SK15 2TD

Thank you for welcoming me and my colleagues to your school. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you. I would like to share the inspection findings with you.

Your school was judged to be satisfactory but there are many good features. Most importantly, your school keeps you safe and provides good support for pupils who need extra help. In return, you show respect for others, work hard, try your best and behave well in lessons and around school. Your personal development is good.

Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and ensure that lessons are calm and purposeful. However, there are occasions when the work you are given is not challenging enough to extend your learning, particularly those of you who find learning easy. You enjoy practical activities, such as problem solving and investigating, although there are still not enough of these activities to help you all to become independent learners. The curriculum is satisfactory. There are good opportunities to study topics involving visits to places like museums, which you really enjoy. You also enjoy the many sporting opportunities provided by visiting coaches and would now like to join in competitions with other schools.

Standards in your school are above average but have been even higher in the past. Leadership and management of your school are satisfactory but improving as school leaders try to help you to reach those high standards again. Leaders are looking for ways to check what is happening in lessons, in your books and what assessments show, to help all of you to achieve as well as you can.

To help your school to improve further I have asked your leaders and teachers to.

- Make sure that teaching in every lesson is as good as it is in the very best ones
- Ensure that you are given challenging work in all lessons, including lots of opportunities to investigate, solve problems and find out more for yourselves. You can help by working hard on those homework assignments.
- Ensure that managers monitor teaching and how well you are making progress in all subjects.