

Stokenchurch Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110342
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	310265
Inspection date	15 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Williams

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	471
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	104
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Alison Simpson
Headteacher	Mr Andrew White
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	George Road Stokenchurch High Wycombe HP14 3RN
Telephone number	01494 482112
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. They investigated the school's evidence to support its view that pupils, including more able writers in Key Stage 1, make excellent progress; the extent to which marking has improved, so that pupils have a clear understanding of their learning; and whether potentially strong monitoring is giving leaders an accurate view of teaching. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of pupils' progress, scrutiny of samples of their work, observation of lessons, parents' questionnaires, and discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and a governor.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Most of the pupils at this very large primary school are of White British heritage. The remainder are from a range of backgrounds, with the largest group being those of other White backgrounds. An average proportion is learning English as an additional language. The proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. Fewer pupils have been identified with learning difficulties than in most schools. Their needs relate mainly to moderate learning and speech, language and communication difficulties. The proportion with a statement of special educational need is about average. The school was formed in 2002, following the amalgamation of infant and junior schools, and came together on the same site in 2004. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are taught in a Nursery and two Reception classes. In addition to the usual point of entry into Nursery, pupils also transfer into Year 3 from three local infant schools. The school has the Activemark award and hosts a privately run after-school club for pupils aged three to 11.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Stokenchurch is an outstanding school. There are many reasons why the school is so successful. Key amongst them are clear-thinking and aspirational leadership, consistently very effective teaching and exceptionally positive attitudes amongst pupils. This potent mix ensures that pupils make excellent progress academically and in their personal development. They enjoy school enormously and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work, particularly the high quality education offered and the contribution made by staff to their children's welfare. One reflected these views in noting, 'The teaching staff are highly committed and seem to enjoy their work. We appreciate the way Mr White leads the school calmly and sensibly.' Staff and governors succeed admirably in their aim to provide a school that pupils 'will attend eagerly, leave with regret and remember with pride'.

Pupils start school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They achieve exceptionally well to reach well above average standards by the end of Year 6. This is reflected in the school's consistently successful performance in the national assessments for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Above average proportions of pupils regularly go on to reach the higher levels. Nevertheless, in 2008 the unvalidated results for pupils in Year 6 show that even more pupils than usual reached Level 5 and, whilst national comparison with other schools is not yet possible, it is clear that standards have risen even higher. Although many of these pupils achieved the higher Level 3 when they were in Year 2, a significant number were assessed at a lower level, and they made outstanding progress to reach Level 5. More able pupils do well because they rise to the demand and challenges placed before them, but staff have high expectations of pupils of all abilities and do not rest on their laurels. A very close check is kept on pupils' progress; the outcomes of regular assessments are recorded carefully; any unexpected deceleration in progress is analysed thoroughly and tackled quickly. A dip in the provisional writing results for Year 2 pupils in 2008 was due, largely, to this group having lower starting points and they, too, made good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties, including those with speech, language and communication difficulties, receive high quality support and, alongside strong links with outside agencies, this contributes to their rapid progress.

The excellent headteacher and senior staff keep a rigorous check on teaching and learning. A very meticulous analysis is made of strengths and areas that might be improved. Staff work extremely hard to improve their practice and deliver high quality lessons that capture pupils' interest and attention. Everything is done to ensure that pupils are able to fulfil their potential; the result is consistently good, and often excellent, teaching. Detailed lesson planning is firmly fixed on giving pupils the right amount of challenge or support. Teachers are very clear about what pupils are expected to learn and these objectives are shared at the beginning, reviewed during and summarised at the end of lessons. Marking, a minor weakness in the school's very successful previous inspection, has improved considerably. Pupils are given comprehensive feedback and are set challenging personal targets that ensure they understand how they are doing and what they should try to improve.

The broad and very rich curriculum contributes very strongly to pupils' academic achievement, enhances their enjoyment and prepares them very well for their future lives. There is a strong and successful emphasis on promoting pupils' personal, social and health education. Pupils respond very well. They make excellent progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. French lessons, taught to all year groups, are very popular and these contribute

significantly to the cultural dimension of pupils' development. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils demonstrated great competence and confidence in speaking the language. Pupils contribute very well to the school's very strong sense of community through, for example, the successful school council, and a high local profile is maintained. Developing links in France are helping to push out pupils' boundaries still further. Pupils' knowledge and respect of other cultures and their excellent behaviour and relationships help ensure that they thrive in the school's very cohesive and inclusive community.

Pupils have a well developed understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives. They appreciate the extensive range of clubs and other activities outside lessons, particularly those that 'help us keep fit'. Staff provide high levels of care that ensure that pupils feel safe and able to learn. Despite its very large size, all pupils are well known to staff, which enables them to keep a close eye on their welfare. Systems to check on the suitability of adults to work with children are extremely robust. A careful check is made of the risk presented by in-school activities and visits out of school. Procedures to protect children, including those who are potentially vulnerable, are excellent. The school works closely with parents, much appreciated by the vast majority. It has sought to improve channels of communication, for example, by extensive expansion of the school's website. Nevertheless, a very few parents feel that communication could be better. The headteacher, staff and governors ensure that there is no complacency and they are exceptionally well placed to ensure that the school continues to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Parents are very positive about their children's first experience of school, some referring to the excellent progress they make, and one noting, 'The transition for both children and parents from Nursery to Reception is outstanding.' Children make outstanding progress because of excellent teaching and the sharp focus staff place on meeting their specific needs. Nursery and Reception classes provide an inspiring, welcoming and supportive environment that stimulates pupils to learn. Staff use assessments carefully to plan the next steps in children's learning, and encourage them to take responsibility for planning their own activities, too. Every opportunity is taken to ensure that children are well looked after. As a result, children feel safe and enjoy their start to school life. They are confident and able to work cooperatively or individually with equal success. The setting is exceptionally well led and managed. Staff make good use of both indoor and outdoor learning environments. For example, children participate fully in running their own construction site in the Nursery outdoor area. Themes such as 'Harvest' allow them to develop skills across the full range of early learning experiences. By the end of EYFS, most children have achieved or exceeded the goals expected of them.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school has no significant weaknesses, but might consider reviewing its communication with parents.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

03 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stokenchurch Primary School, High Wycombe, HP14 3RN

I am writing to thank you for the way you welcomed us to your school for its recent inspection and to tell you what we found out. A special thank you goes to those who met with us to give us your views. You were very helpful. I am delighted to tell you that we agree with the staff, governors and most of your parents that your school is outstanding. If you are not sure what that means, please ask your teacher - I am sure she will be really pleased to tell you!

There are lots of things about your school that are excellent. You are making extremely good progress in your work because your teachers do an excellent job and you are keen to do your best. We really enjoyed seeing you work in lessons and were delighted to see so many hands going up when your teacher asked a question. Because you try so hard, your work is of a very good standard. I was very impressed with the Year 6 French class, but we also saw excellent work in the Nursery, Reception and all of the other classes, too. Well done. We know how proud you are of your school, and you play a big part in making it so good.

Your headteacher, staff and governors do an excellent job in making sure that you are able to do your best. Even though yours is a very big school, the adults know you all very well, so they are able to keep a close eye on you. Lots of you told us that you feel safe in school and this is because the staff take very good care of you. Even though your school is excellent, the staff want it to become even better and we know you will want to help. A very few of your parents feel that the school could do better at sharing information with them. You can help by making sure that you always hand over letters to your parents when you take them home.

Once again, thank you for your help with the inspection. We wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Williams

Lead Inspector