

Stapleford Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110619
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	310365
Inspection date	25 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Helen Ranger

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	228
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Gresham
Headteacher	Mrs C Turner
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bar Lane Stapleford Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB22 5BJ

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	25 September 2008
Inspection number	310365

Telephone number
Fax number

01223 508720
01223 508721

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- how well leaders and managers promote and improve pupils' achievement;
- how effectively pupils' personal development and well-being are nurtured;
- how the school is improving its curriculum and assessment arrangements to promote more efficient and enjoyable learning.

The inspectors gathered evidence from records of pupils' progress, observations of lessons and breaktime activities, examples of pupils' work, discussions with pupils, staff and governors, and questionnaires and letters from parents. The main documents used by the school in its monitoring were examined. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors 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

This average-sized school serves the village of Stapleford and the surrounding area. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and come from very varied home circumstances. About 15% of pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups and almost all of these speak fluent English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little below the national average. The school's Reception classes cater for children in the final year of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). When children start Reception, their attainment varies widely but, overall, is in line with the levels expected nationally for four-year-olds.

The headteacher joined the school last year and the temporary deputy head joined at the beginning of this term. The school hosts two independently managed settings on its site, Sunnyside Pre-school and Stapleford After-School Club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Stapleford Primary is a good school. Since its last inspection, the staff and governors have continued to ensure that pupils achieve well in both their academic progress and personal development. There have been recent improvements in the ways that pupils' individual progress is assessed and built on and in how staff determine the school's next priorities for action. Staff, governors and parents commented on the contribution made by the headteacher to the school's successes and her clear vision for how the school can be improved further.

Pupils achieve well. By Year 2, they regularly reach above average standards in the national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics. The older pupils also do well. The school's results in the Year 6 national tests in English and mathematics have been consistently above average since its last inspection. This has generally been the case in science too, although there was a slight dip in 2007. Over the past few terms, the staff have focused closely on developing the arrangements for measuring and tracking pupils' achievements with the aim of raising standards further. Each class teacher now increasingly takes responsibility for ensuring that every individual's progress is being built up systematically year by year. These efforts go hand in hand with good quality analysis of the school's overall performance by the headteacher. As a result, staff are in a position to ensure that pupils receive any extra help or challenge as appropriate to accelerate progress. There is a good programme for this, supported well by the team of teaching assistants and the efforts of the special needs co-ordinator. The school uses links with outside agencies well to enhance provision for the pupils who can benefit from specialist help.

Pupils' good personal development reflects the determination of the staff to provide an all-round education. Pupils enjoy school. Their above average academic standards combine with their personal skills to ensure they have good foundations for their future lives. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There is little reported bullying or racism in the school. Behaviour and attendance are good. Pupils have a solid appreciation of how to live safe and healthy lives and the school holds an Activemark national award. Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities for physical and social activities, such as those provided by the local sports partnership, school clubs and a varied programme of visits. They benefit from the school's own swimming pool. The on-site after-school club provides a useful service for the families who use it. Pupils take on responsibilities in school, for example through the school council, and in a wide range of other activities, such as parish, village and charity events. Their commitment to a sustainable environment has been recognised by an Eco-schools award. They pursue global links, for instance through an International Day and Stapleford's twin parish in Tanzania.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers generally plan efficiently for the ability range in each class and work well in partnership with the teaching assistants. A few parents wrote to inspectors with concerns about the large class sizes in some age groups. Inspectors consider that the school has acted well to minimise any negative impact of this. The larger classes benefit from additional support from teaching assistants and good use is made of the large premises and site to provide plenty of space for activities. The curriculum is satisfactory. Basic skills have a high priority in all age groups. Subjects are covered in line with national guidance. The extensive outdoor areas have been developed well to enhance learning and pupils are excited by developments to the medieval moat and the wild area. Staff have started to review the curriculum to make it even more relevant and interesting for pupils, for example by linking subjects more closely and encouraging more problem solving and independent learning. Not enough practical

or investigative learning yet takes place. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that the lessons they enjoy most are often those where they can be most active and contribute their own plans and ideas.

The quality of pastoral care is high and much valued by pupils and their parents. Academic support and guidance are sound but are not consistent enough across all age groups. Examples of good target-setting, informative marking and opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own learning are evident. However, the overall quality of these varies quite markedly from class to class and between subjects. Staff have rightly identified that the pockets of good practice need to be available to all pupils if they are to support the drive to raise standards further.

Leadership and management are good. The school has coped well with recent personnel changes, including appointing the new headteacher and the retirement of long-serving members of staff. The temporary deputy head brings recent relevant experience of developing the curriculum in other schools. She works well with the head and is enthusiastic about how she can contribute to this school's plans for improvement. Self-evaluation systems are used well to determine the school's current effectiveness and in planning improvements. Over the past year, there has been a focus on developing the monitoring roles of all the subject leaders, including the less experienced staff. They carry out their responsibilities satisfactorily and are now more skilled in how to check pupils' standards and the quality of provision. Time has been allocated for them to spend longer observing and supporting colleagues than they have in the past. This is a promising initiative, which is currently at an early stage and it is too soon to judge its impact on improving pupils' progress.

The governors are well informed and active. They support and question the school's work effectively and are particularly influential in assisting with the improvement and maintenance of the premises. Their monitoring programme also includes visits to check how well pupils are getting on. Planned developments are summarised in a comprehensive school improvement plan. The plan is a sound management tool but does not identify as clearly as it could how staff and governors will check that their actions are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Staff and governors forge productive links in the area. The Stapleford Umbrella Association serves as a liaison body for local organisations in the village and enables the school to work at the centre of its community. There are close partnerships with parents and with nearby schools. Currently these schools are exploring trust status to strengthen links further and to extend the range of services the school can offer its families. Since its last inspection, the school has continued to offer good value for money and, with its current staff and governor team, is well placed for the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Reception class gives children a good start. Children settle quickly into the routines in both classes, including those who share a class with pupils in Year 1. The adults work well as a team and promote children's care and welfare effectively. Already at this early stage of the school year, most children are confident learners who enjoy school. Any who need some extra support with starting school or with their learning receive it. In recent years children have made good progress in Reception so that, by the end of their first year in school, attainment has exceeded the goals expected nationally.

Staff plan an interesting range of activities, both indoors and in the outside area. Relationships with adults are very positive and children are calm and considerate in their behaviour. Adults

lead activities that all children need to cover and provide others that children can choose if they wish. There are relatively few opportunities at present for children to initiate and plan their own activities. The school's overall leadership and management arrangements ensure that the children do well. There are good links with the pre-school setting on site. However, specific leadership roles for the Reception age group are not well defined, so that the staff are not as clear as they could be about how they can play a full part in future developments.

What the school should do to improve further

- Successfully implement the plans to develop a more practical and integrated curriculum for all age groups which engages pupils and promotes their independence more effectively.
- Ensure better consistency in how pupils are informed about how well they are doing and what to focus on next in their learning.
- Ensure that the increased monitoring by subject and age group leaders, including in the EYFS, results in higher standards across the curriculum.

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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?	2
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	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

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

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?	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	2
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

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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

26 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stapleford Community Primary School, Stapleford, Cambridge CB2 5BJ

This letter is to thank you for welcoming and helping us during our recent visit to your school.

We think that you attend a good school. You do well in your work and reach good standards. The children in Reception get a good start to school. Attendance is good and you behave well towards each other. You are taught well and appreciate the clubs and visits that your teachers provide. You particularly like lessons where you can be active. You also told us that you like the opportunities to share your views with adults. Your headteacher knows what she would like to do to keep your school improving and the staff and governors help her work to achieve this. It was good to see you learning how to lead safe and healthy lives. You are fortunate that your school has such lovely big grounds. We had never seen a school with a moat before!

There are a few things we have asked the school to keep improving.

- We would like the staff to give you even more activities where you can show that you can work independently, plan for yourselves and solve any problems you find, right from Reception.
- We have asked the teachers to give you more time to think about what you have learned and how you will carry on improving. You can help by listening carefully when adults talk to you about this and by acting on any comments they write on your work.
- Your teachers are using lots of ways to check that you are all getting on well with your work, such as looking at lessons together and discussing the best ways to help you learn. We think this is good and have asked them to make sure the information they gather is used to make your school even better.

We hope that you carry on making the most of your time at Stapleford Primary.

Best wishes

Helen Ranger

Lead inspector