

Stanley Common CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112855
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	311030
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Keith Edwards

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	83
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Susan Beardmore
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Gillot
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2004
School address	143 Belper Road Stanley Common Ilkeston Derbyshire DE7 6FS
Telephone number	0115 9322437
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small primary school serves the village of Stanley Common. Almost all of the pupils are of a White British background and all come from homes where English is the first language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average although there is a wide range of ability in each class. All of the pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has made good progress since the last inspection, particularly by improving the quality of teaching and the way pupils' achievement is checked. As a result, the quality of learning is much improved and standards are rising. The children really enjoy coming to school because they feel safe and secure and the curriculum is well matched to their needs. As one pupil commented, 'Our school is special because it feels like a little house that feels like another home.' The school is at the heart of the community that it serves and works well with other schools and agencies to share good practice and to support those pupils who have learning difficulties.

The youngest children make satisfactory progress in Reception, although this is not as rapid as in other parts of the school because teaching is less effective here and the accommodation presents some constraints. Pupils make good progress across the rest of the school and current standards are above average by Year 6. Several factors contribute to the pupils' good achievement. Effective teaching based on a vibrant curriculum captures the pupils' interest and motivates them to work hard. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and a clear picture of what they need to do to improve. Pupils who find learning difficult make good progress because of the good support they receive from their teachers and teaching assistants. Skilful teaching and a well-planned curriculum enable the more academic pupils to reach their potential, particularly in mathematics. This is because the work set is carefully matched to the pupils' ability and there is a strong emphasis on problem solving.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They greatly enjoy coming to school and attendance rates are above average. Staff respect and value the pupils, who consequently develop self-confidence, self-esteem and self-discipline. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They know how to keep themselves safe. They respond well to the school's initiatives to encourage them to adopt healthy lifestyles, particularly by eating a balanced diet and by taking part in sport. They work hard and play well together. Pupils willingly take on extra responsibilities as members of the school council, and make a valuable contribution to village life, particularly through links with the church.

Leadership and management are good. Teamwork is at the heart of all of the school's successes, and the headteacher is the key catalyst behind school improvement. This is both a strength and an area of concern as there is scope for the greater sharing of the responsibility for subject and school development. Nevertheless, the school leadership has systematically improved the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils are very well cared for throughout the day and their academic guidance is good. The school's view of itself is accurate and has identified appropriate areas for further improvement. The role of the governors has developed well and they provide good support for the work of the school. The school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

There has been an unsettled period in staffing in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection and this has restricted the progress made. Nevertheless, children are able to settle quickly into school routines, because of the close links with home. The good ratio of adults to children also ensures that those in most need feel secure because they receive one-to-one attention. The children respond well to the school's systematic teaching of letter sounds. This enables them

to develop a secure basis for the development of their reading and writing skills. However, much of the teaching lacks sparkle and does not consistently tackle the next stages of each child's development. This limits their progress. Furthermore, opportunities to develop the children's skills outdoors are limited by the lack of a discrete play area. Otherwise, the curriculum is satisfactory, and, together with the secure environment and sound teaching, ensures that most reach the standards expected nationally by the end of Reception and are given a sound preparation for the next stage of their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of the provision in the Foundation Stage to promote good progress.
- Improve the effectiveness and contribution of leadership at all levels.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and reach above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Pupils also make good progress at Key Stage 2 and current standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. Test results for Year 6 pupils in 2007 were exceptionally high because the very small and very academic cohort was challenged to reach its potential. Although the underlying trend is one of improvement and achievement is good, current standards in Year 6 do not match those of 2007. Written work is improving because pupils are encouraged to write in different styles. Standards in mathematics and science are rising because pupils benefit from practical investigations that develop their thinking skills. Overall standards are rising because the school is improving its assessment procedures and the work set is challenging, especially to higher-attaining pupils. Ambitious targets have been set for the oldest pupils and they are clear about how to reach them. Those pupils who sometimes find learning difficult receive sensitive support and so make progress in line with that of others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils benefit from a climate in school that enables them to grow in confidence and self-esteem and to take responsibility. This is particularly evident in the improvements to the school environment that stem from school council decisions. Pupils are courteous and mindful of each other and enjoy trusting relationships with the adults in school. They are confident learners and work very well together.

Their behaviour is outstanding because they conduct themselves so well in such limited space. Attendance rates are consistently above average. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and there are particular strengths in the moral and social aspects. Their spiritual and cultural development is well promoted through art and music. Pupils are aware of other religions through their work in the humanities. They have a strong sense of their own cultural traditions and an appropriate awareness of cultural diversity. Pupils are very supportive of the school's drive to promote healthy lifestyles. They know how to stay safe and are developing the necessary skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) to prepare them for the world of work. Links with the community are strong.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A common denominator in all classes is the warmth of the relationships that promotes good behaviour, encourages the pupils to try hard and sets a good climate for learning. There are particular strengths in lessons where teachers have high expectations of the pupils' performance and so generate a good pace to learning. In most classes, the work set is closely matched to the range of ability, and lessons are conducted with warmth and humour. These elements are not as consistent in Reception and this limits children's progress. Pupils enjoy learning with computers and the interactive whiteboards are used well, particularly to demonstrate new techniques. Teaching assistants provide valuable support, particularly for those pupils who find learning difficult.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is structured effectively to support learning in the mixed-age classes. However, the cramped accommodation limits the opportunities for the children in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 both within and outside the classroom. Throughout the school there is an appropriate focus on promoting skills in literacy and numeracy. ICT is used to good effect and is playing an increasing part in supporting pupils' learning. The curriculum strongly supports the pupils' personal development with many valuable opportunities to promote their well-being. A key strength of the curriculum is the link with the local community, particularly the church that supports the pupils' sense of well-being. The school is also very successful in providing a broad range of well-chosen visits, visiting speakers and a wide range of activities beyond the school day to enthuse the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is a strong emphasis on nurturing and developing each child as an individual; pastoral care is excellent. Staff are strong role-models and consequently the school is a happy and inviting place in which to work and learn. Parents speak warmly about the care that is taken to help their children settle quickly into school routines and prepare for the next stage of their education. Arrangements to ensure pupils' safety and well-being are securely in place and understood by all staff. Pupils are confident in the knowledge that adults will help them with any problems should they occur. Pupils of all abilities are well supported academically because procedures for checking and tracking their progress are being systematically developed and used shrewdly to support learning. The school has developed a good system for setting and reviewing personal targets which gives pupils a clear understanding of how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has resolutely fashioned the strategy to bring about school improvement. Barriers to further improvement have been removed although the accommodation still presents

constraints. The headteacher combines a heavy teaching commitment with a full range of administrative responsibilities and subject leadership. This strategy enables her to maintain an accurate view of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the school, and there is strength in the quality of the relationships and the teamwork. However, responsibilities are not shared evenly and there is more scope for the further professional development of her colleagues. Nevertheless, a very secure base has been established to promote further improvements and the momentum is strong. Governors are committed to the work of the school and provide conscientious support. Their awareness of their responsibility to hold the school to account has grown and they have established good procedures to monitor the work of the school.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stanley Common C of E Primary School, Ilkeston, DE7 6FS

I really enjoyed my visit to your school this month because everybody was so helpful and friendly. I was very pleased to be able to work with you in your classrooms, join in with your assembly, find out how successful you are in a range of different activities, and meet the school council. I can understand why you enjoy your school so much as there are so many things that make your school special. Here are some of them:

- you clearly want to do your best to learn in lessons and I am very pleased with the standard of your work
- everybody understands the school rules and your behaviour is wonderful
- everybody is so polite and courteous
- the staff work hard to help you enjoy school and they teach you well
- the school provides a good range of activities and visits to keep you interested
- you know how to stay fit and healthy and are very caring of each other
- Mrs Gillot and the staff organise the school well.

You are very fortunate to be able to attend Stanley Common School. Your school is improving because Mrs Gillot and the staff try really hard to make learning fun and are working hard to help you. However, perhaps the school needs to think carefully about how the jobs are shared. I know that you achieve well but, I am also asking your teachers to help you do better in the Reception class by improving the teaching and the accommodation.

Yours sincerely

Keith Edwards

Lead inspector