

Stoney Middleton CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112858
Local Authority	DERBYSHIRE LA
Inspection number	311031
Inspection date	5 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Roger Sadler

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	17
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Lyn Holyoake
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Fitzpatrick
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2001
School address	High Street Stoney Middleton Hope Valley Derbyshire S32 4TL
Telephone number	01433 630520
Fax number	01433 639018

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	5 December 2007
Inspection number	311031

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Since 2005, the number of pupils at Stoney Middleton has fallen from 28 to 17. The school, over the last 18 months, has been considered for closure. An acting headteacher from within the staff has led the school since September 2006. Staffing arrangements have been disrupted due to staff absence and most appointments have recently been temporary pending the decision on school closure. It has been decided that the school will remain open and the recently appointed new headteacher is due to take up his post in the New Year. There are 4 pupils in the Reception class and 13 Year 2 to Year 6 pupils in the oldest class. The school is situated in an area of some economic advantage. Most pupils live in the village and are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average. Because numbers are so small, children's attainment on entry varies considerably from year to year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The quality of education provided by the school, leadership and management and pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory. Parents are strongly supportive and pupils are proud of their school. One parent captured the views of many when she wrote, 'This school treats the whole child individually. The children know they are valued members of the school and local community and play an active role with evident enjoyment.' Pupils' personal development and well-being is good and the school has a happy, caring and family atmosphere. Pastoral care and support are good. Relationships are very good. Consequently, all pupils behave well, enjoy school, attend regularly and are polite and considerate. They enjoy learning and are taught to take a pride in the way they present their work. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because of the individual support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and good in the Reception class. Classroom management is good. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well to add clarity and interest to lessons. Lessons are planned to ensure that they meet the learning needs of the wide age range in the older class. Teachers do not always clarify exactly what they are looking for in pupils' work and pupils themselves are given too few chances to evaluate their own success. The school regularly assesses and carefully analyses each pupil's progress and directs extra help to those who are not achieving their full potential. Pupils know at what level they are working but show little understanding of targets or of where and how to improve their writing and mathematics work in order to move on to the next level.

Despite disruptions to leadership over the last four terms, the acting headteacher has ensured that the quality of education and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. For the last three years, pupils have left the school with broadly average standards. The school has a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and where improvements are needed. Consequently, the school improvement plan is directed at improving the correct issues. However, the plan contains too little detail of actions planned, or of staff training that will be provided and this has slowed the pace of improvement. Ways for governors and senior staff to check on the progress of improvement measures in the plan are also unclear. The recent success in strengthening provision in the Reception class and the ways of checking how well each pupil is doing indicates that the school has satisfactory capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start. Care is taken to ensure all children settle quickly. This year's Reception children entered the school with knowledge and skills in line with what is typical for their age. Teachers know the children well and carefully plan activities, which help them make good progress in all areas of learning, from whatever level they have previously reached. Despite the limitations of the external play area, children's physical development is good and they enjoy moving, playing and learning out of doors. Their parents are right to be very pleased with the good progress that they are making, especially in their language and communication skills and in their mathematical development. They are being well prepared for more formal learning in the older class.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers set clear targets for pupils in writing and mathematics and that pupils know exactly where to focus their efforts to improve.
- Ensure all teachers regularly specify what a good piece of work should look like so pupils see how to evaluate and improve particular aspects of their work.
- Ensure the school improvement plan is sufficiently detailed to allow governors and senior staff to check its success more rigorously so that the pace of school improvement quickens.

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

Over the last three years, Year 2 and Year 6 pupils have attained broadly average standards in national assessments. Pupils' work and school records indicate that most pupils are currently attaining in line with standards expected for their ages in writing, mathematics and science, representing satisfactory progress for these pupils. Pupils are given frequent chances to practice their reading and develop their speaking skills and they are confident and articulate when talking to each other or to adults. Standards are a little above what is normally found in reading and speaking and listening. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress in line with that of other pupils, because they receive appropriate additional support that meets their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. They respect others and accept differences between people, but their first-hand knowledge of the multi-cultural nature of British society, though satisfactory, is somewhat limited. Pupils show satisfactory understanding of how to lead a healthy life and understand the importance of regular exercise and a healthy diet. All pupils are consulted weekly in the school meeting about school life and they know that they can influence change. Older pupils, without prompting, often take responsibility for helping younger pupils and they take good care of them. All pupils adopt safe practices and feel safe in school. They understand, for example, the importance of checking the school gate is kept closed. They know that they can always talk to an adult if they have a problem and are proud and pleased that there is no bullying in their school. Pupils make valuable contributions to the community by raising funds for local and international charities. They have learned much about citizenship during the period when the school was being considered for closure. Their good personal development and satisfactory basic skills give them a sound preparation for the next stage of education and for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. All staff have good relationships with pupils and pupils speak very warmly of staff, particularly of the good humour they show in lessons and of how

interesting the work often is. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils when they are working individually or in small groups. Their time is used less effectively in whole-class sessions. Teachers expect pupils to present their work well and poorly presented work is not accepted. However, teachers do not always make it clear enough to pupils where they need to focus their efforts to improve aspects of their work. Consequently, pupils are not able to check how successful they have been or what they need to do to improve further.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Teachers work hard to provide interesting and stimulating starting points for learning. For example, pupils enjoy learning about life in Britain during the Second World War and preparing work leading to a performance of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. They enjoy and benefit from regular French lessons. The curriculum is suitably modified to meet learners' needs in the mixed age class. Opportunities are occasionally lost for more able pupils to be provided with more challenging work or to encourage them to develop the skills required to work independently. Visitors and visits suitably enrich the curriculum. The school works hard and successfully to ensure that pupils are given satisfactory opportunities for sport and exercise off site, despite limited space on site.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good and academic guidance satisfactory. Children are cared for sensitively and individually and their pastoral needs are well known to staff. The acting headteacher has introduced an effective way of checking the progress pupils are making. This information is used satisfactorily to provide extra help for pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Pupils know at what level they are working and have a target for when they should reach the next level, in writing and mathematics. However, they are unclear about the steps needed to reach their targets and about which aspects of their work they should concentrate on in order to move forward.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The governing body is aware that its efforts to oppose the closure of the school have diverted their attention away from their role of monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and providing continual challenge to support it in improving achievement from satisfactory to good. Governors have an evident intention to remedy this now that the future of the school is resolved. A series of staff changes and temporary arrangements have led to the Local Authority providing additional support, for example in checking on the quality of the school's work. Despite these disruptions, provision is satisfactory, improvements have been brought about and standards have been maintained. Therefore, leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher has arranged effective staff development to improve teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and, as a result, provision is good and Reception children are progressing well. The school improvement plan is based on satisfactory systems for collecting information about the school's work and is aimed at making appropriate improvements. It does not, however, include sufficient detail of how the intended improvements will be made or evaluated by senior staff and governors.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	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	3
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

6 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Stoney Middleton CofE Primary School, Derbyshire S32 4TL

Thank you all for making me welcome when I inspected your school. A special thank you to those who talked to me about school life at lunchtime. I enjoyed my visit to your school.

I found your school a happy place where people get on very well with each other and treat each other politely and with respect. You make satisfactory progress in your work. You are getting on well enough in mathematics, science and writing and doing well in reading and speaking and listening. New children in Reception are doing well and are well on the way to learning to read, write and count.

You behave well in lessons and clearly you are proud of your school. I am pleased you feel safe in school and know that adults look after you well. Many of you, especially older ones, take on responsibilities, without being asked. You think of others' well-being when you raise funds such as the money you raised for your goat for Africa and join in well with community activities.

Both you and your parents told me that you regard your school highly and very much appreciate the work the staff do. I could easily see that you enjoy school life and you attend regularly, so well done! Staff are aware of your learning needs and provide extra help to those of you who are not doing your best. Your headteacher and the staff are working to improve the school and know that there are some things that need to be changed in order to improve the school further. I have recommended that they should:

- make sure that teachers make it clear to you what your work should look like to help you check on your own success and to improve even more
- be sure that each one of you knows the targets you are set in each subject and how you can achieve them
- improve the plan that adults write so that it provides better guidance for the work they do to keep improving your school even more quickly.

Yours sincerely

Roger Sadler

Lead inspector