

Stoke Gabriel Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113221
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	311163
Inspection date	2 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Stephen Lake

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)	79
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	5
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Green
Headteacher	Heather Boote
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Hill Stoke Gabriel Totnes TQ9 6ST
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school serving mainly the area around the village of Stoke Gabriel. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are normally taught alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2 but a large increase in the number of children joining the EYFS means that they will be taught in a separate class from January 2009. This is causing some re-arrangement of EYFS accommodation, which was taking place during the inspection. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average as is the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These are mainly moderate learning or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Attainment on entry to the school at age four varies from year to year because of the small cohort but is normally in line with that expected of children of this age. The school has the 'Healthy Schools' award.

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. Standards and achievement have risen since the last inspection and are continuing to improve. Pupils achieve well. They start school with standards that are in line with those normally found and leave with standards that are above average overall and exceptionally high in English, although standards in mathematics are average and achievement in this subject is satisfactory. Achievement in the EYFS is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils in the main school due to the good support they receive.

The improvements taking place are due to the good leadership and management. The excellent leadership of the headteacher has drawn the staff together into an effective team despite having to cope with some recent changes of staff. Together with the outstanding work of the governing body, they have formed a strong team that has an accurate picture of what is working well and where improvement is needed. An example is the rapid improvement in English resulting from well-targeted developments.

Many parents wrote in support of the school and the improvements seen. A typical comment was, 'There is a much more vibrant and "upbeat" atmosphere.' Nevertheless, a minority of parents were unhappy with a number of aspects of the school, including behaviour, leadership and management and the way in which the views of parents and pupils are taken into account. Inspection evidence did not support these concerns and inspectors do not agree with the views of these parents.

The personal development of the pupils is good. There are some outstanding features. The high quality care, support and guidance that they receive ensure that behaviour is outstanding and pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe. Pupils enjoy school so much because the good quality curriculum has been reorganised to provide good links between subjects. This makes it more relevant for pupils and fun for the teachers to teach as well as making a strong contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils know exceptionally well how to stay healthy and keep fit, as shown by the Healthy School award. Pupils make a very strong contribution to the community through the many opportunities for taking responsibility around the school.

Pupils make good progress because of the good teaching. The strong emphasis on learning through investigation and research motivates pupils to learn. Skilled teaching assistants provide good support to ensure all pupils are included in lessons. Robust and rigorous procedures for checking pupils' progress are used effectively to support pupils and guide them in improving their work, particularly in English. Nevertheless, marking is inconsistent, especially in mathematics. It does not always give enough guidance on how pupils can improve. The school recognises that the monitoring of mathematics is not strong enough. Given the many improvements that have taken place recently, the school is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children settle quickly and happily into school as a result of effective links with the pre-school, well-established routines and carefully structured induction procedures. They make satisfactory progress from starting points that are in line with those expected for their age to achieve broadly average skills by the time they start Year 1. The good care and support from adults

mean children develop confidently and feel safe and secure. This is demonstrated in the way that children have so easily adjusted to a different classroom and organisational structure just days before the inspection. Children form positive relationships with one another, working and playing together well. Parents are involved in their children's learning by contributing to assessments.

The leadership and management of the EYFS is sound. Strengths and weaknesses in the provision are well known and the plans for improvements are already having an impact. From January, EYFS children will have their own classroom and the move to set this up has already started.

Children have access to an appropriate balance of self-selected and structured play activities and adult-directed activities in the indoor learning area. They enjoy learning when activities are presented in ways they can have fun, for example when games are used to reinforce basic skills. All areas of learning are covered appropriately and there is a suitable balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. Children become increasingly independent in their learning because the well-organised indoor learning environment enables them to make satisfactory progress through opportunities to select activities for themselves. Nevertheless, the recent classroom changes mean that children do not have enough opportunities to learn outdoors or develop their skills in different environments.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the monitoring of teaching and learning in mathematics to make sure that standards rise to match those in English and science.
- Improve the provision in EYFS, especially the opportunities for pupils to learn outside, to match the good quality curricular provision in the rest of the school.
- Ensure that marking, especially in mathematics, provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills that are in line with those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress through Reception and start Year 1 with average skills. Pupils make excellent progress in Years 1 and 2 due to the high quality teaching and, by the age of seven, standards are significantly above average. These standards are now starting to work through into Key Stage 2. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement is good. The school has exceeded the challenging targets set for this year. Standards are exceptionally high in English. The average standards in mathematics are not as good as in English and science and achievement in mathematics is only satisfactory. Standards in English have improved a good deal as a result of the school's focus on writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in relation to the targets set for them. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average and improving as pupils have access to the improved resources for this subject.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Classrooms are characterised by very well motivated, attentive and very well behaved pupils enjoying their learning. Attendance has improved significantly due to the good efforts of the school. However, it remains only average because too many parents choose to take their children

on holiday during term time. Pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is good. Although pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, their awareness of the richness and diversity of British culture is a relative weakness. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and local community. For example, the active school council has considered a 'travel plan' and pupils have contributed to the parish council's 'Parish Plan'. They have a strong social awareness and are keen fundraisers for charity. Pupils look after each other in many ways such as helping at playtimes by encouraging cooperative play and caring for those who need help as 'playtime buddies'.

Behaviour is excellent. Pupils respect and value each other. They show a good commitment to healthy living by choosing to eat and drink healthily. Many choose to attend an extensive range of sports clubs. Pupils' improving ICT skills and excellent literacy skills, together with their ability to work together, ensure that pupils' preparation for the next stages of their education and their future economic well-being is good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The very good relationships between adults and pupils set a positive tone for learning. Teachers generally plan work matched closely to pupils' individual abilities and consequently progress is good in most lessons. This is less consistent in mathematics, where work planned does not always challenge pupils enough and therefore progress slows. Teaching assistants are well informed about what pupils are expected to learn from activities and have a good level of expertise in the areas they are working in. All teachers have good questioning skills that engage pupils and help them develop their ideas and understanding. This is particularly noticeable in English, where it helps pupils to organise their writing effectively. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practise their skills through topics. Examples were seen in geography and local studies, where pupils used their mathematical and ICT skills effectively to present the results of a traffic survey. Although classrooms have interactive whiteboards these are not always used well enough to motivate and inspire pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good quality curriculum has some outstanding features. Foundation subjects are now linked together to help pupils use their literacy skills, contributing to the improvement in English. Nevertheless, this is not yet impacting enough upon mathematics. The focus weeks, when a particular subject is given higher emphasis, are appreciated by pupils and make a strong contribution to their enjoyment of school. The emphasis on staying healthy and taking part in physical activity such as the 'Leap' programme makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. A good range of popular extra-curricular clubs enriches the curriculum. These activities, along with residential visits, provide good support for pupils' social development and add greatly to their enjoyment of school. A regular programme of visits and visitors enriches the curriculum and provides high quality opportunities for children to develop specific skills, for example in art.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school looks after the pupils very well. They feel well supported and are confident that staff will resolve any issues of concern promptly. Positive links with external agencies are used effectively to support pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Safeguarding procedures are rigorous in ensuring that pupils are well protected. Good quality procedures are in place to assess how well pupils are doing and provide guidance on how to do better. The improved use of assessment information to focus intervention support has been successful in raising standards. Pupils are well aware of the targets set for them. However, marking is inconsistent. Although most marking in English identifies ways in which pupils can improve, marking in mathematics is not rigorous enough in ensuring that pupils are suitably challenged by providing guidance to them on how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The excellent leadership of the headteacher has ensured that senior staff and governors have formed an effective team, working to a common purpose. Success is evident in the way the provision has improved since the last inspection. The leadership is effective in raising standards across the school and securing improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

Senior leaders are developing their leadership and management roles adequately, but there is some inconsistency in the way they evaluate the quality and impact of their actions to improve outcomes for pupils, particularly in mathematics. Systems for evaluation through the monitoring of teaching and learning by middle managers are not sufficiently robust. They are better in English than mathematics. The school has recognised this and has strategies already in place to address this.

The governing body provides excellent support for the headteacher. Many governors give up considerable time to support the school. They are working tirelessly to seek permission, approval and funding for building alterations.

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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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	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?	2
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	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	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**

2 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stoke Gabriel Primary School, Totnes, TQ9 6ST

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and the polite and confident way in which you spoke to us.

- We think that yours is a good school because you learn well and attain high standards in most subjects. Some of the things that we liked most are listed below.
- You achieve well, especially in English where you achieve very well to reach standards much better than most schools.
- You make a very good contribution to the school and the village. We were very impressed by your work on the 'Travel Plan'.
- The very good care and guidance you receive is why you understand so well how to stay safe and how to keep fit and healthy.
- You learn well because the teaching is good and your teachers have made sure that you have interesting things to learn.
- The school looks after you extremely well, which is why you feel safe.
- Your school is the way it is because of the good leadership and management. Your headteacher and the governors (the other adults responsible for the school) do outstanding work. They lead a good team whose members all work hard to help make the school better.
- To help make your school even better we have asked the school leaders to:
 - make sure that they check on how well you are learning in mathematics so that you do as well as you do in English and science; you can help by working as hard as you can in mathematics
 - make sure that those of you in Reception have more opportunities to learn through activities outside the classroom
 - make sure that marking, especially in mathematics, shows you how you can improve your work.

Thank you again for your help in finding all this out.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake

Lead inspector