

Stapleford Abbots Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114958
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311771
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Florence Olajide

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Smith
Headteacher	Mr David Bailey
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2003
School address	Stapleford Road Stapleford Abbots Romford Essex RM4 1EJ
Telephone number	01708 688207
Fax number	01708 688535

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2008
Inspection number	311771

© Crown copyright 2008

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 an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves the rural village of Stapleford Abbots near Romford. The vast majority of pupils are from a White British background. Very few are at the early stages of learning English and less than a tenth are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well above average, although none have a statement of educational need. Children enter the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are similar to those expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides pupils with a satisfactory education. It, nonetheless, has some good features. Pupils learn in a very caring and supportive environment, which enables them to thrive emotionally and socially. As a result, their personal development and well-being are good and their self-esteem is high. They behave well and have good attitudes to learning. However, the school does not yet fully maximise their positive attitudes to ensure they make even better progress during their time in the school. Instead, pupils' attainment varies from year to year and across subjects, such that they make satisfactory progress through the school and achieve average standards at the end of each phase of their learning. This is partly because teaching is only satisfactory and some teachers demonstrate weak subject knowledge. In addition, assessment data is not always being used rigorously enough to identify and eradicate pockets of underachievement.

Parents greatly appreciate the good care, guidance and support provided by the school. The good attention paid to pupils' personal well-being contributes to the caring atmosphere and fosters positive relationships throughout the school. Pupils for example, explain that they can share jokes with the adults. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school, local communities and further afield. The curriculum is satisfactory with some good features. Of note is the very strong focus on promoting healthy lifestyles, particularly through various sports that pupils thoroughly enjoy. Nevertheless, the curriculum does not yet take sufficient account of the needs of the boys or the more able pupils who are not always fulfilling their potential.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Although leaders at all levels are committed to providing pupils with an education that prepares them well for adulthood, their efforts are not having a strong enough impact on standards and achievement. Despite the regular monitoring of teaching and learning and the collection of useful information about pupils' progress, there are weaknesses in the analysis and use of data. This is leading to inconsistencies in the targets set for year groups in different subjects. While some targets are quite challenging, others are not. In addition, there is a lack of sufficient rigour in using the information gathered to underpin school improvement planning. Governance is satisfactory. Governors carry out their statutory duties adequately and provide good support. However, they do not have a sufficient understanding of the school's data on pupils' attainment and progress in order to challenge the school or hold it to account for its standards.

The school uses its links with external agencies effectively to enrich the curriculum and provide pupils and their families with good support. It has made satisfactory progress in addressing issues raised in the previous inspection and this demonstrates a similar capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The school provides pupils in the Foundation Stage with effective support, which enables them to settle quickly into school. Pupils develop mature attitudes to learning and demonstrate good self-control. They play and work happily with each other, and are good at following instructions. They generally make satisfactory progress from broadly average starting points and by the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority achieve standards that are in line with national expectations. However, recent staff changes have led to weaknesses in the planning of the curriculum. Currently, the youngest pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn through

play, to develop their creativity and control over the way they move or handle tools and equipment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the Foundation Stage curriculum provides effectively for pupils' physical and creative development.
- Develop strategies to accelerate the progress of boys and the more able pupils.
- Improve teachers' subject knowledge so that teaching is consistently good across each year.
- Improve the analysis of data by school leaders and governors so that assessment information is used more rigorously to direct the focus of school improvement planning.

A small proportion of 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

Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Although standards in Key Stage 1 dipped significantly in 2007, the intervention strategies put in place for the cohort are significantly accelerating their progress. In response to the last inspection, the school's efforts to improve standards in writing are beginning to have an impact on the achievement of the less able pupils, but not on those who are more able. This is particularly noticeable in Key Stage 2 where standards achieved in 2007 by the more able pupils were much lower in writing than in reading.

All groups of pupils, including the very few who are new to learning English and those with learning difficulties or disabilities, make similar rates of progress through the school. However, boys' attainment is much lower than that of girls and the school does not yet have appropriate strategies in place to address this gap. More able pupils do not always reach the levels of which they are capable.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's strong focus on Christian values promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which are good. Pupils are sensitive to each other's needs and are good at looking after each other. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community. For example, older pupils support the development of the school's website and produce regular newsletters for other pupils. Pupils frequently raise funds to support school initiatives as well as a children's hospice in England and a school in Malawi. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to stay safe and lead healthy lifestyles. Their satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills and good information and communication technology skills provide a sound foundation for secondary school life. Attendance is only satisfactory, mainly due to holidays taken during term time by a small, but significant, number of families.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Some of the teaching is good but it is not consistent enough across the school to enable all pupils to make good progress. There are gaps in some teachers' subject knowledge, which are leading to uneven progress by pupils across subjects in different year groups. Most lessons have clear intended outcomes, which are made explicit to pupils. As a result, pupils understand what is required of them and the majority work studiously to complete their work. Most of the time, pupils are provided with activities which promote enjoyment and increase their engagement in learning. However some activities, for example in writing, border on the mundane and generate high levels of frustration, particularly among boys. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly but not enough use is made of this information to modify teaching to meet the different learning needs of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, although some aspects are good. It makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being, particularly through the strong focus on healthy lifestyles and personal responsibility. Provision for sports is strong with specialist tuition from coaches. This, together with the wide range of sports clubs on offer, enable pupils to achieve well in physical education and in swimming. Pupils also enjoy learning Spanish. The themed curriculum days provide opportunities for the pupils to link their knowledge across different subjects through group projects and tasks.

Despite its strengths, the curriculum is not yet enabling boys to close the achievement gap between them and the girls. The school is providing additional programmes to challenge the more able pupils, although this is only at an early stage of development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils appreciate the genuine care from adults and return it with affection. Without reservation, pupils indicate that they like school because of their teachers and the support they receive. Parents echo the views that pupils are happy in school. Procedures for safeguarding pupils' welfare are appropriate. The school's very clear expectations of behaviour promote an orderly and safe environment. Behaviour is good and the few incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and to the satisfaction of most of the pupils and their parents. Academic guidance is good. There are good systems for tracking pupils' progress and pupils have individual targets. Pupils are provided with regular and positive feedback about how well they are doing and this promotes their self-esteem. However, the feedback does not always point pupils towards the specific skills they need to improve to reach their target. The school works effectively with a range of external agencies and local schools to provide pupils including those with learning difficulties or disabilities with good support. It maximises these links to provide extended services such as family and adult learning programmes to pupils and their families.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher is highly committed to the school and well respected by parents. The secondment of the deputy headteacher has resulted in temporary changes to staffing and leadership roles, not all of which are working effectively to meet pupils' needs. Leaders regularly collect useful data about pupils' progress but they do not use it effectively enough to identify key weaknesses in skills. This has masked issues such as the underachievement of some of the more able pupils and the lower attainment of boys. Consequently, target setting for year groups is not helping to drive up standards fast enough because it does not always take full account of pupils' potential or previous underachievement.

Governors provide good support and work closely with staff. However, they do not have a strong enough understanding of achievement data to be able to challenge leaders effectively. Subject leaders have become more involved in monitoring since the last inspection. This is helping school leaders to develop a satisfactory overview of many of the key strengths and areas for development. Nonetheless, the weaknesses in data analysis mean that school improvement plans are not focussed sharply enough on improving outcomes of pupils.

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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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?	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?	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

27 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stapleford Abbots Primary School, Romford, RM4 1EJ

Thank you for talking to me when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed listening to your views and as I promised, this letter is to explain what I found out about your school.

Your school is providing a satisfactory standard of education. You told me that you really like your teachers and that the adults look after you very well. I agree with you and your parents that the school is good at helping you to become responsible young people. Most of you behave well and work hard in school. You make an excellent contribution to the school, for example through the way you help with the school website and the newsletters you produce to keep everyone informed. I was also impressed by your confidence and the way you all look after each other. You also take time to raise money for the children's hospice and the school in Malawi. You enjoy the after school sports clubs and you are rightly proud of being the local swimming champions!

Many things about your school are good but there are areas for improvement, which will help you to achieve better in your work. I have asked your headteacher, the staff and the governors to do the following things to improve the school:

- provide the Reception children with more chances to learn through play so that they can move around and handle themselves safely
- set some of you more challenging targets and help the boys and those of you who can cope with harder work to learn faster
- ensure that all teaching is good so that you do well in all the subjects every year
- improve the way the headteacher and governors use the information on how well you are doing to make the school better.

I hope you will continue to do your best and that your parents will help the attendance to improve by making sure that you all attend school regularly.

Yours sincerely

Florence Olajide Lead inspector