

# Stonebow Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120104
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313519
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mary-Jane Edwards

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	290
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Tony Milodowski
<b>Headteacher</b>	Olivia Wood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Stonebow Close Loughborough LE11 4ZH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01509 646217
<b>Fax number</b>	01509 843105

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Stonebow is a larger than average sized primary school. Just over a third of pupils come from beyond its catchment area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, although numbers have doubled in the past year. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average and has been rising for the last three years. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is below that found nationally. A few classes have had changes of staff during this school year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Stonebow Primary School provides a good education that is rightly valued by pupils and their parents. One parent summed up the views of many in saying, 'The school has a fantastic feel and provides stimulating learning.' It is a friendly and welcoming community where pupils achieve well.

Most pupils leave at the age of 11 with standards that are well above national averages. They are taught well and the outstanding curriculum offers exciting and relevant opportunities for all pupils, including those with LDD, to learn and make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well, in line with their peers. Test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 rose sharply in English in 2007, reflecting good achievement. Current standards indicate that this recent improvement will be continued with a greater proportion of pupils reaching the higher level, especially in writing. The gap between reading and writing standards has started to narrow because of the strong focus on improving the quality of the teaching of writing, especially for the more able. However, through rigorous self-evaluation, the school has rightly identified that more needs to be done to ensure that writing is consistently well taught.

The good care, guidance and support pupils receive ensure that they develop well as confident, happy and mature individuals. Pupils learn and play well together and their behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. They develop respect and tolerance for others and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Pupils know that their views are valued and they have regular influence on decisions that are made, for example through the school council. The school forges close links with the local and wider community and this encourages pupils to act as good young citizens. Pupils' good skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, combined with their ability to take responsibility, means that they are well prepared for the future. As a result of recent changes to the way teachers mark pupils' work and involve them in discussing their own progress, the majority of pupils now understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Teachers frequently plan practical activities in an exciting curriculum, which inspire pupils to be inquisitive and attentive. This contributes significantly to pupils' enjoyment of school. Whilst the quality of teaching is good overall, the quality of individual lessons varies from satisfactory to outstanding. Part of this variation is because the school has experienced some disruption to staffing. The school's leaders have worked hard to minimise the impact of this on pupils, but they acknowledge that not all teachers have consistent expectations of pupils' progress and some pupils in years 3 and 4 have progressed more slowly. When teachers do not challenge pupils to produce their best, this often leads to careless presentation of work.

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher provides a clear steer for the future direction of the school. Senior leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development, for example, the need to improve the leadership in Years 3 and 4. Key staff monitor pupils' standards regularly and track pupils' progress carefully.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children come into school with skills that are below the expected level for their age, especially in their social and emotional development. They make good progress however and by the time

they are ready to leave the Reception Year most are on track to achieve the early learning goals. Progress is particularly strong in personal, social and emotional development and this is demonstrated by children's positive attitudes to their work, play and each other. Children learn quickly because of the strong relationships that they make with adults and the way the staff participate actively with them in their play. Staff carefully assess children's progress and plan activities that build on their interests. As a result, activities are made exciting and fun, which means that most children want to be fully involved. As one parent commented, 'My daughter in the Foundation Stage loves school and I feel she has a teacher who understands her needs.' The school works very actively to promote a good partnership with parents, using a home school diary. This gives regular updates on work covered in class and suggests ways that parents can support their children's learning at home. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Strengthen the leadership in Years 3 and 4 in order to raise the expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensure a consistency of good progress across the school.
- Raise standards in writing, particularly for more able pupils, by sharing the most effective practice in teaching.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well, including those who need extra support and those who have English as an additional language. The good progress children make in the Foundation Stage continues during Key Stage 1 so that standards are above average by the end of Year 2. In the 2007 national assessments, the proportion of pupils who reached the higher level was nearer to average, but in the current Year 2 it is above average, including in writing, which has been identified as a whole-school priority for improvement. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to achieve well so that by the time they leave Year 6 standards are well above average in all subjects. Again, this year, the progress made by pupils in writing has improved significantly, particularly by more able pupils, so that their standards too are above average. School based tracking of pupils' progress, as well as pupils' current work, shows that the progress made by pupils is slower in Years 3 and 4, but it improves rapidly in Year 6.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils say they feel happy in school and enjoy the wide range of opportunities provided for them, especially the clubs, after school activities and residential visits. Most pupils behave well in school, instances of bullying are relatively rare and pupils say they know what to do if these occur. They are aware of the consequences of their actions, but understand if they are polite, well mannered, kind and helpful, these attributes will be acknowledged, for example through the 'Chance to Change' initiative. Pupils can explain clearly how to keep safe, and the school council has been particularly active in helping pupils to have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Older pupils thrive on taking responsibility, for example as 'Little Leaders' supporting the younger pupils at playtime. Pupils have a good knowledge of the diversity of cultures and backgrounds and they feel this gives them a better understanding and tolerance of others. Attendance is average and most pupils come to school regularly and on time. The school is working hard to improve attendance, in particular to limit the number of pupils who take holidays in term time.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The very positive relationships in all classes help pupils to be fully engaged in their learning. This is most evident in practical tasks, for example, pupils in Year 6 involved in data collection were highly motivated, cooperating well and thoroughly enjoying their work. There are some good examples of teaching assistants being used very well to help different groups of learners, although in one or two lessons this good resource is underused. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables pupils to be clear about what it is that they are expected to learn. Generally, they are given an appropriate challenge, but in Years 3 and 4, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always sufficiently high. The strong whole-school focus on improving pupils' progress in writing has led to better teaching of this subject and higher standards, including for the more able. However, leaders are aware that the good practice that exists is not yet consistent across the school.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

This is a strength of the school. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the wide range of extra-curricular activities and residential visits, which support both their personal and academic development very effectively. Carefully planned visits and visitors make the curriculum rich and exciting. Practical tasks, which the pupils really enjoy, are a prominent feature of a well-designed, thematic approach to learning. They are very much in evidence in the outstanding workshops, which relate to each theme, and are run weekly in Years 3 to 6. A wide range of adults, including parents, who can teach the relevant skills, are skilfully deployed in these sessions. Excellent use is made of the school grounds for a wide range of activities for pupils of all ages. The curriculum has been very well adapted to help pupils who need extra support. For example, early morning reading clubs are successfully helping to raise the standards of boys' reading.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Pupils are well looked after and say they feel happy and safe in school. There are good links with a range of outside agencies to support the most vulnerable pupils. Those with LDD, as well as those with English as an additional language, get good support from teachers and teaching assistants, enabling them to make good progress. All requirements for safeguarding pupils are fully in place and good attention is given to carrying out risk assessments, particularly when visits are taking place. Academic guidance has improved since the last inspection. Targets are well known by pupils and mostly offer a good level of challenge to help pupils improve their work. There are some good examples of marking which help pupils to know how successful they have been and how they can do even better. However, this good practice is inconsistent and especially in Years 3 and 4.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher has a strong commitment to the needs of all pupils and has a clear vision for the school's future. She has been particularly successful in developing an effective leadership team with clearly defined roles, a shared approach and a determination to raise standards. A robust system, which involves staff at all levels, as well as governors, checks how well the school is doing and highlights what it could do better. As a result, there have been some good improvements, for example in the standards of pupils' writing by the end of Year 6. Most recently, the school's analysis of its own performance has identified the need to strengthen leadership in Years 3 and 4 in order to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve. Although a number of staff with key leadership responsibilities are relatively new to their roles, they are passionate about their subjects, and the impact of their work is already visible in improved standards in writing and in the improved standards reached by more able pupils. Governance is good and the highly effective chair of governors ensures that inexperienced governors are well supported in their roles. Good partnerships have been established with parents and with other organisations locally, which support pupils to make good progress. The effective way in which the school has tackled weaknesses identified at the previous inspection and the good understanding that leaders have about how to address current weaknesses, combined with a very united staff team, indicates that the school has a good capacity to make further improvements.

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## 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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	3
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 the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

Dear Children

Inspection of Stonebow Primary School, Loughborough, LE11 4ZH

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. It was obvious that you go to a good school, behave well and get on very well together. You told us that you really enjoy the topics you study and the chance to go on school visits. We could see that teachers plan exciting work for you and give you a super range of clubs. We were glad to find that the teaching is good and you make good progress. If you need some extra help in lessons, you are supported well. At the same time, the staff encourage you to be independent whenever possible.

Most of your lessons are interesting and successful. This means that most of you do well in your work and by the time you are in Year 6, you are well prepared for secondary school. We were particularly impressed by the improvements that many of you have made in your writing recently. Many of you told us that you know your targets and you explained to us how they help you to improve your work. We could see that you are eager to take on extra responsibilities in school, and we were impressed by the way the 'Little Leaders' in Year 6 help the younger children at playtime.

We could see that you get on very well with your teachers and their assistants. We know that some of you have had changes of teacher recently. I have asked Mrs Wood, her staff and school governors to do all they can to make sure that your lessons are as good as possible and that you make good progress, whoever your teacher is. I have also asked that the most successful ways of helping you to improve your writing are used in all of the classes.

It was a pleasure finding out about your school. Keep working hard and enjoying all it has to offer you.

Best wishes

Mrs Mary Jane Edwards Lead inspector