

Sturton by Stow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120478
Local Authority	LINCOLNSHIRE LA
Inspection number	313633
Inspection dates	13–14 December 2007
Reporting inspector	David Matthews

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Bates
Headteacher	Mrs H Allen
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	School Lane Sturton by stow Lincolnshire LN1 2BY
Telephone number	01427 788210
Fax number	01427 787159

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 smaller than average primary school. A below average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible to free school meals. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with identified additional learning or other needs is similar to that nationally while the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above the national average. The school has gained the nationally recognised Investors in People and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory and governors discharge their statutory duties responsibly. Adequate steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection.

Children receive a good start to their education in the Foundation Stage. Elsewhere achievement is satisfactory. Children enter Reception with the skills, knowledge and understanding expected for their age and leave at the end of Year 6 with average standards.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and most pupils make satisfactory progress. However, because teaching does not always rigorously challenge the higher achieving pupils, the proportions of pupils reaching the higher Levels 3 and 5 at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 respectively are lower than those nationally. This is an area for improvement in reading in Key Stage 1 and in writing and mathematics in both key stages. Teachers' marking encourages pupils, but comments are not consistently effective across classes in informing each pupil exactly how to improve. The leadership team is aware that not all higher achieving pupils progress consistently well, and this is a school focus for improvement.

Self-evaluation is mainly accurate. Subject leaders have a thorough knowledge of individual pupils but their understanding of the progress of different groups is less precise. Their satisfactory impact on subject development lacks a sharp focus on the rigorous use of whole-school progress data to raise achievement.

Particularly strong pastoral guidance means that pupils feel safe and secure and enjoy school. There are rigorous procedures for safeguarding pupils and the school works well with outside agencies to support this provision. The school does not always sufficiently ensure that all pupils clearly understand their individual learning targets. Pupils' personal development is good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum is good and enriched in a wide range of ways. Information and communication technology provision has improved and is used well to support learning across subjects. There is good and effective emphasis on citizenship.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress, most reaching the early learning goals set for the end of Reception, and some exceeding them. The environment is calm and orderly, and staff are attentive to the needs and welfare of all children. When children start school they quickly learn routines, show good attitudes towards learning and enjoy school because learning engages them well. Good teaching effectively encourages them to be as confident and independent as possible. Children have good access to all six areas of learning. Toys and other learning resources are inviting and the use of the outdoor area enables physical play to develop well. The ways adults intervene to support and accelerate children's learning are well focused, though the quality of such support is not consistently good across all adults.

What the school should do to improve further

- Rigorously challenge the higher achieving Key Stage 1 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics so that more reach the higher Level 3.

- Challenge the higher achieving Key Stage 2 pupils in writing and mathematics so that more reach the higher Level 5.
- Ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of their learning targets.
- Develop the role of subject leaders so that they gain a more precise view of the progress of different groups through the school, and use it to raise achievement.

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

Pupils' achievement is adequate. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average.

From Reception, where children receive a good start, most pupils' progress until the end of Year 6 is satisfactory. However, not enough pupils reach above average standards at the end of both key stages because they are not always rigorously challenged in lessons, and some do not have a clear understanding of how best to improve.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 fell in 2007 due partly to the higher than usual number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, the number of higher achieving pupils reaching Level 3 was below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.

Progress through Key Stage 2 has been broadly satisfactory over the last three years in all core subjects. In 2007 the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in science was greater than that nationally, while for English and mathematics it was lower. The school has identified weaknesses in writing, and there is a current focus on mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. In the calm and happy environment, pupils develop good relationships with each other and with teachers. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The good range of educational visits, including a residential visit for Year 6 pupils, makes a strong contribution to their personal development and to their enjoyment. Pupils know how to stay healthy and demonstrate this by choosing healthy snacks and participation in sports. Behaviour is good during lessons, at lunchtime and in the playground. Pupils say they feel safe and, despite occasional bullying, they are confident of adult help if problems arise. Pupils enjoy learning and mostly work hard. They particularly like the social aspects of school life, and the lessons that engage them well in practical activities. Attendance is average and the level of unauthorised absence low. Pupils contribute satisfactorily to the life of the school and the wider community. School council representatives and playground 'zoning buddies' take their roles seriously. Older pupils are confident monitors and librarians, but some would like more opportunity to develop their independent skills through responsibility. Pupils are learning the appropriate basic skills to prepare them satisfactorily for secondary education and the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The teaching manages pupils' behaviour well. A good range of strategies is used effectively to engage pupils and to promote sound learning. Interactive whiteboards, for example, are used increasingly well to support learning. At the start of each lesson, teaching gives pupils a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn. However, marking sometimes misses valuable opportunities to inform them exactly what they need to do to improve. Teaching is mostly, but not consistently, brisk. Explanations are clear and discussion between pupils enhances their involvement and improves understanding. There are good opportunities for pupils to write at length, though teaching does not always ensure that the presentation of pupils' work is as careful as it might be.

In Key Stages 1 and 2 teaching praises pupils well for trying, but it does not always rigorously challenge all pupils. Expectations of what pupils will do are not always high enough, particularly for pupils who are capable of achieving above average standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. Teachers plan a curriculum that focuses effectively on the interests of pupils. Information and communication technology has improved and is now used well to support learning in other subjects. The provision for literacy and numeracy satisfactorily supports pupils' adequate achievement in these subjects. Pupils' enjoyment of the school's 'citizenship passport' initiative reflects the good provision for personal, social and health education. Well organised individual education plans support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. A good range of additional activities, including regular visitors, effectively enriches the curriculum. Pupils benefit from themed weeks, after-school clubs, productions and educational visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. All pupils are well cared for because the school knows individuals well and pays good attention to their pastoral needs. Parents are complimentary about the care for pupils with specific physical and medical needs. 'My child has special needs and the school has done everything for him', one said. Pupils learn in a safe environment where relationships are good. There are good and rigorous procedures for child protection, risk assessments and for medical and emergency aid with regular training for staff. The school works closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils needing extra help receive the necessary support. Pupils have group learning targets for literacy and numeracy. However, not all pupils understand their targets well enough to ensure a significant impact on improving their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, and enable pupils to make adequate progress. The headteacher and staff have introduced potentially effective strategies to improve pupils' performance, including adopting good practice from other schools. Leaders successfully promote pupils' good personal development and well-being. Through satisfactory self-evaluation the headteacher, governors and managers have an appropriate view of the school's strengths and a suitable understanding of what needs doing to improve. This awareness includes the recognition for more rigorous challenge for higher achieving pupils. Subject leaders play a satisfactory role in the school's management. They have detailed knowledge of individual pupils, but a less precise understanding of the comparative progress of different pupil groups. This impacts adversely on the school's current focus on high achieving pupils to ensure their consistently good achievement. The school sets percentage targets for pupils expected to reach each level at the end of Key Stage 2. It is careful to ensure that these targets are realistic, and it pays good attention to the learning capacity of most pupils, including those identified as having learning difficulties and disabilities. Targets are less challenging, however, for pupils to reach the higher Level 5, particularly in mathematics and English.

The school rightly seeks the views of pupils and parents. Most parents are supportive and say that they feel they are listened to and respected, though some say they do not feel so welcome. The inclusion of all learners is central to the leadership's vision and the school creates an ethos where pupils feel safe and secure. The leadership's impact on pupils' academic performance is reflected in their track record of adequate achievement. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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?	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	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	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	3
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?	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?	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

15 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sturton by Stow Primary School, Sturton by Stow, Lincolnshire LN1 2BY

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school to see how well you are learning. You told us a lot about your school. This helped us to decide what the best things are and what needs to be improved.

These are the best things about the school.

- Most of you say that you enjoy school.
- We are pleased that you attend school regularly.
- You behave well and listen well in lessons.
- You know how to stay safe and healthy.
- There are lots of interesting things happening outside lessons.

This is how things could be better.

- In Key Stage 1 more of you could do well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In Key Stage 2 more of you could reach Level 5 in writing and mathematics.
- Some of you could reach these higher levels if teachers make sure you always understand your learning targets.
- Teachers could watch your progress more closely to make sure you are all doing as well as you possibly can.

As everyone tries hard to put these things in place over the next few months you can help by continuing to try hard with your reading, writing and mathematics and by behaving as well as usual. The inspectors agree with your headteacher that more of you can reach the higher levels in your reading, writing and mathematics! We wish you well.

D Matthews Lead inspector