

# Old Stratford Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121892
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314137
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linda Killman HMI

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	227
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gavin Sturgess
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gill Tween
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Willow Grove Old Stratford Milton Keynes MK19 6AZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 267700
<b>Fax number</b>	01908 564394

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Old Stratford is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British and come from favourable social and economic backgrounds. When pupils start school in Reception, their attainment is generally in line with national expectations. The school has achieved several national awards, including Healthy Schools Gold, Artsmark Gold, Eco Schools Bronze, Activemark and the Basic Skills Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school with some good features. The parents are very appreciative of what the school provides. One captures the views of many others when commenting that 'this school is a fine example of what a primary school should be'. Since the school's last inspection, improvement has been uneven. Following a period of instability in staffing, standards dipped sharply in 2005 in all subjects in Key Stages 1 and 2. Swift, decisive action by the headteacher has successfully reversed the trend. The headteacher is very effective. Her clear vision for the school is based on thorough and accurate evaluation of all aspects of the school's work. Pupils are back on track, making satisfactory progress to reach above-average standards in English, particularly in reading, and mathematics by the time they leave the school. Their performance in science in 2007 was exceptionally high.

Under the headteacher's determined direction, the staff are hard working, committed to improvement and responsive to change. Convincing evaluation of standards and achievement has informed staff and governors that the pupils are capable of achieving much more in English and mathematics. Strategies to improve pupils' writing are beginning to produce results; given the pupils' capabilities, standards in mathematics are not yet as high as they could be. The headteacher undertakes most of the monitoring of teaching and learning. Senior staff and subject leaders are currently receiving training to enable them to undertake regular checks of teaching in the future to ensure that monitoring systems are sustainable.

Teaching is satisfactory, with some good features. Lessons are generally well organised and teaching is energetic. An underlying weakness in some teaching is that expectations for pupils to complete their written work within a specified time are too low. Most pupils work at a casual pace, often on tasks that are well within their capabilities. The best teaching generates a sense of urgency with a variety of well-chosen, challenging activities that engage pupils and encourage productivity. As a result, in these lessons, pupils make good progress.

The curriculum meets pupils' individual needs well and is impressively enriched. The pupils have much to look forward to and enjoy. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress well, and pupils with special gifts and talents have access to a range of opportunities to extend their skills. For example, the orchestra, conducted by a specialist music teacher, brings musicians together to practise and perform at a high standard.

The pupils' behaviour is mostly good in class and around the school. They make very good relationships with adults and each other and are keen to take on responsibility, because they are well cared for and supported. There have been no exclusions for a number of years; racist incidents are rare but treated seriously. Attendance is excellent and the school works effectively to communicate the link between attendance and achievement. The pupils know how to stay safe and be healthy, and where to seek support from adults if they need it. Their spiritual, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. At Old Stratford, the pupils develop good social and learning skills that successfully equip them for their transfer to secondary school and future lives.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

In the Reception class, pupils behave well and enjoy learning. They are happy, confident individuals, keen to learn and growing in confidence. Attainment on entry is in line with national

expectations. The good provision offers a range of interesting activities to capture their interest and move their learning on both inside and outdoors. The adults work together effectively, promoting good behaviour and attitudes to learning. Relationships with parents are secure and the staff regularly inform them of their child's progress with a 'daily update'. In this safe and secure setting, the pupils flourish and make good progress. Their attainment is above average by the end of the year.

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

- Ensure that in writing and mathematics across the school, pupils match the good progress that they make in reading and science.
- Raise expectations for how much written work pupils can produce in lessons.
- Involve senior staff and subject leaders in monitoring and evaluation activities.

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 satisfactory in English and mathematics, and good in science. There is a careful analysis of attainment and progress of specific groups of pupils in order to promote pupils' achievement. This approach has raised standards significantly in science. Although standards in English are above average, pupils' skills in writing are weaker than in reading across the school. The school introduced a systematic programme to teach writing using a carefully structured writing skills pyramid that teachers and pupils use to plan the next steps in writing development. As a result of accurate evaluation, the school is concentrating on developing writing across the school and in particular making writing tasks more stimulating and interesting, especially for boys. Work seen in pupils' numeracy books shows that in some classes, pupils have insufficient practice in recording their working in written form. The school's strong commitment to the arts enables many pupils to reach high standards in music, drama, dance and art.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good personal development and well-being are characterised by harmonious relationships throughout the school. Pupils feel safe; they say that bullying is rare and adults look after them well. Older pupils readily take on additional responsibilities such as looking after younger children in the playground. Their understanding of Britain as a diverse society is limited, although they willingly engage with others from a different cultural background. Most pupils enjoy lessons and many are keen participants in sports and clubs. Their play is active and lively yet they act responsibly with regard to safety. Pupils enjoy their healthy lunches and fruit snacks and show a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Through good partnership work with the local Business and Enterprise College, the pupils learn valuable entrepreneurial skills that contribute to their future economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching is improving, but is not yet good enough to meet the school's high academic aspirations for all its pupils. Teachers plan conscientiously and in the best lessons provide pupils with activities that are lively, challenge their thinking and accelerate their learning. Teaching assistants play a positive part in promoting good progress, especially for pupils needing extra help. Pupils make slower progress in lessons where learning is restricted by lack of pace, and expectations are too low for what pupils can achieve within the time. Marking is well used by some teachers to move learning forward, but less so by others. The assessment arrangements for checking pupils' progress and targeting resources towards areas of particular need are effective in English and contribute to improvement in writing; they are not as effective in mathematics.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school is beginning to seize opportunities to link subjects together to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. There are some imbalances in content. For example, in mathematics there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use and apply their numerical skills to solve problems. Attractive, eye-catching displays of pupils' work enhance the learning environment in classrooms and communal areas. The outdoor spaces are developed imaginatively as areas for work and play. Visiting experts regularly share their specialist skills to enhance pupils' learning. One of many artists in residence worked with pupils to create a beautifully sculptured dragon that sits by the pond greeting pupils and visitors on arrival. Specialist teachers enrich the curriculum in music and French. Educational visits and events are plentiful and take-up is high for the extensive range of clubs on offer. Parents recognise the value of the broad curriculum: 'the school provides truly excellent opportunities in the arts'. Annual music and drama productions are exemplary and provide enrichment and enjoyment for pupils.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Staff are committed to the care and well-being of pupils and they are guided and supported satisfactorily in their learning. The school has worked hard to build a strong inclusive community where pupils' interests are paramount. As a result, pupils develop trusting relationships with all adults in the school. Parents rightly expressed pleasure at the good level of care that the school offers, although some procedures to protect the safety of the pupils and staff are out of date. Support for pupils who find learning difficult is good, drawing effectively on the support of external services if appropriate. The school's procedures for checking pupils' progress are systematic but are not used effectively by staff in all subjects. Child protection procedures are fully in place and understood by staff.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

The inclusion and success of all learners are central to the headteacher's vision and drive the direction for the school. Her determined leadership and drive to raise standards are key factors

in moving the school forward. The quality of subject leadership is variable; some key staff are not yet sufficiently involved in monitoring activities. The headteacher gathers a range of evidence from quality assurance activities. This is effectively communicated to staff and governors so that they have a clear view of where strengths and weaknesses lie and can plan for the future. Governors carry out their statutory responsibilities satisfactorily and know the school well. The school's systems for setting realistic and challenging targets are grounded in detailed, accurate analysis and tracking of pupils' attainment and progress. There are some clearly emerging strengths in aspects of current leadership and management that contribute to the school's good capacity to improve.

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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?	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	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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	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	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
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?	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?	3

<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>	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	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	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

17 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Old Stratford Primary School, Old Stratford MK19 6AZ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently to see how well you are learning. We were very impressed with your courtesy and good manners. You willingly shared your views on school life at Old Stratford; this was a great help. We have thought carefully about all that you told us and I would like to highlight the school's good features as well as those that need improvement.

- Your teachers care about you, look after you and make sure that you learn all that you should so that you reach and often go beyond the standards expected for your age by the end of Year 6. You are capable and confident learners. We were very impressed with the high quality of the school productions (we watched the DVDs), the orchestra and the art and design work that we saw on display – especially the dragon! The exciting range of school events and after-school clubs means that you always have something to look forward to and enjoy. Your attendance is excellent. To make the school even better we have asked the staff and governors to:
  - make sure that you make as much progress in writing and mathematics as you do in reading and science
  - expect you to write more in the time you are given in lessons
  - enable more teachers to check that you are learning as well as you can.

Your headteacher, staff and governors know that although you are successful learners, you have the capability to excel. They will be asking more from you, especially in writing and mathematics. We are confident that you will rise to the challenge. I wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman

Her Majesty's Inspector

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