

Stoke-on-Tern Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123399
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	314589
Inspection date	7 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Brian Holmes

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	137
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glyn Clavin
Headteacher	Jacqui Wright
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2005
School address	Rosehill Road Stoke Heath Market Drayton TF9 2LF
Telephone number	01630 638332
Fax number	01630 638332

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Stoke-on-Tern is a smaller than average primary school which has close links with the local church. It serves a farming community as well as a military base and a Traveller community. A significant number of pupils travel long distances to get to the school. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the normal time is much higher than that seen in most schools.

The school has achieved the Healthy Schools gold 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. One of its strengths is its inclusive nature in serving a wide range of pupils, who join or leave in every year group. Parents from the different communities are supportive and appreciative of the school. As one commented, 'This is a lovely school with approachable staff'. The school's work in partnership with others to support pupils' well-being is outstanding and was widely commented on in the parent questionnaires. The staff work hard to enable all pupils to achieve well in their academic studies and their personal development and well-being. Their commitment to the school and their effectiveness as a team were aptly demonstrated during the headteacher's recent period of prolonged absence from school, when staff continued to provide a good quality of education for all pupils.

Children enter the school with attainment that is broadly in line with what is expected for their age. In the Foundation Stage they make good progress and achieve well. This good progress continues throughout the school and pupils achieve well in Years 1 to 6. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 their standards of attainment are above average. However, pupils achieve better and attain more highly in English than in mathematics and the school recognises that this aspect of their achievement needs to improve further. Pupils' good achievement and attainment are a result of effective teaching and learning and good curricular provision. Pupils say, 'The way that teachers teach us helps us to remember things and makes learning fun.' They are provided with many activities that interest and stimulate them to do well. Good leadership and management have also had a positive effect on pupils' achievement and attainment. The school uses self-evaluation well to identify strengths and areas for improvement. However, the school recognises that its self-evaluation processes and work to raise standards have to focus more on mathematics to further improve achievement in that area. Pupils' performance is regularly checked to identify those who are not on track to reach their targets. Leaders then effectively use the resources available to put in place interventions that support these pupils' progress and enable them to reach their potential.

The school has a strong ethos of care, guidance and support for its pupils and this results in good standards of personal development and well-being. Their social development is outstanding but the school is aware of the need to improve their understanding of other cultures in modern British society. Pupils enjoy school, as seen in their good behaviour, and think the school is 'special' because of all the activities on offer to them. They have a good awareness of how to live healthily and how to stay safe, with many pupils making healthy food choices and taking regular exercise. They make a good contribution both to the school and the wider community, with older pupils taking the role of 'guardian angels' to support younger pupils at playtime. Their good standards of achievement and attainment, their positive attitudes and the opportunities they have to work in teams on mini-enterprise projects, mean that they are prepared well for the next stage in their education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision in the Reception class enables children to get off to a good start and achieve well. When they move into Year 1, standards are above average. Their good progress is the result of good teaching and curricular provision, with a strong emphasis on developing children's language and social skills. Adults create a happy caring environment and put a strong emphasis on care, giving children just the right amount of help but also encouraging them to become

independent. Children play and work together well. Activities are stimulating and matched well to the needs and abilities of each child, with a strong emphasis on speaking and listening. Daily sessions on letters and sounds help to boost their early reading and writing skills. Since the previous inspection, the outdoor area has been improved to include equipment to develop children's physical skills. However, because it is not a secure area, children do not have free access to it, which hinders their learning. The coordinator has rightly judged this to be an area for improvement and firm plans are in place to address the issue.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the opportunities pupils have to develop and apply their skills in mathematics in order to raise standards and achievement in the subject and bring them in line with those in English.
- Extend the opportunities pupils have to develop their understanding of other cultures in modern British society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement in Years 1 to 6 has improved and is now good. Important factors have been the increased emphasis on writing skills and improved use of assessment to put pupils in ability groups in mathematics. As a result, there has been a significant improvement in boys' achievement and rising standards in mathematics and writing. Despite the improvement in mathematics, increased rates of progress in writing mean that pupils are still achieving and attaining more highly in English than in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils from the Traveller community are making good progress and achieving well because of the good levels of support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupil's social development is outstanding, supported by good spiritual and moral development. Their social development is seen in their excellent understanding of the rights and responsibilities of living in a community. Prospective candidates for the roles of school councillor and house captain put their case to the other pupils who then vote for their chosen candidate. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory because they have limited opportunities to develop their understanding of other cultures in modern British society.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their enthusiastic participation in all school activities and their positive attitudes to learning. They particularly like the range of sports activities that the school offers. Pupils say they feel safe and have someone to turn to when they have a problem. They adopt safe practices such as walking sensibly around school and learning how to keep safe whilst using the Internet through work on e-safety. Pupils make a good contribution to the school in their role as house captains and school councillors, and to the wider community through the work they do to raise money for charities, such as Farm Africa. Through these activities, the pupils are developing into mature and sensible young citizens.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good. Teachers always make clear to pupils what is expected of them in lessons and, in Years 3 to 6, pupils are expected to evaluate how well they have done in the lesson. Good planning takes account of what pupils have previously learned. There are good levels of challenge for pupils of different abilities and a good pace to pupils' learning. In most classes, pupils have good opportunities to work independently and find things out for themselves. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well in lessons, for example, to provide pupils with a visual stimulus to divide using groupings of numbers. Although teachers match group and individual tasks to pupils' abilities, they do not always do so during whole class sessions and, as a result, some pupils struggle to follow the activity. Teaching assistants are deployed well and provide good levels of support for pupils' learning and personal development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well. Good programmes have been put in place to improve pupils' levels of attainment and achievement. The 'Big Writing' initiative has boosted writing skills. Good use has been made of drama, speaking and listening and ICT to stimulate pupils in their writing. Pupils say that these activities are fun and help them to use their skills. The 'Creative Learning Journey' programme has been successful in improving achievement by giving pupils opportunities to practise their writing in different subjects. Similar work to enable pupils to apply their mathematics skills is in its early stages and is not yet having a positive effect on achievement in mathematics. A comprehensive programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship enables pupils to make good progress in their personal development. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to develop their skills through links with a sports college and after school clubs, and in music through instrumental tuition and the school choir. There is good enrichment of the curriculum through visits and visitors, which broaden pupils' horizons and develop their personal skills well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff place a high priority on pastoral care and provide a happy and safe environment which helps pupils to grow as individuals. Safeguarding arrangements are rigorous and the school has good systems in place to protect and support pupils. Links with outside agencies to support pupils with specific needs are excellent and all pupils receive good support. Risk assessments for particular activities are undertaken rigorously to ensure pupils' safety. However, ongoing risk assessments are not carried out or recorded systematically. Academic guidance is good with some outstanding practice in Years 5 and 6, where pupils use their writing targets to improve their written work in subjects such as history. Pupils know their targets and use them to help them improve their work. These systems have been refined, and contribute positively to improving pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has created a good teamwork ethic amongst staff and is supported well by an effective leadership team and the governing body. She provides a clear direction for the school, focused on raising pupils' standards of achievement and personal development and well-being. Good systems for checking the effectiveness of teaching and learning and a rigorous system for checking pupils' progress have resulted in good progress by all groups of pupils. This indicates that the school has a good capacity to improve its performance further. Leaders set high expectations for improvements in pupils' progress that have paid dividends in the improved levels of achievement and attainment. Subject leaders are contributing positively to raising standards of achievement, particularly in English. The governing body fulfils its duties well and is closely involved in checking the performance of the school through its committees and the work of subject 'link governors' working with subject leaders.

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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?	1
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 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 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?	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?	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

8 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stoke-on-Tern Primary School, Market Drayton TF9 2LF

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school. We thought that you were polite and friendly. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say. We know you like your school and enjoy going there. We think that Stoke-on-Tern is a good school with several strengths. These are the main things we found out about your school.

- You make good progress in your work and reach standards higher than those found in most schools.
- You behave well and have good attitudes to your learning.
- You have a good understanding of how to live healthily and how to stay safe.
- You like your teachers and enjoy your lessons.
- You enjoy school and like the wide range of activities provided for you, particularly in sport.
- You are well looked after by all the adults in school.
- All the adults in school work hard to help you do your best.
- Your headteacher and teachers have clear ideas of how they can make your school even better.

In order to make the school better, we have asked the school to:

- help you improve your mathematics skills so that you can do as well in mathematics as you do in your reading and writing
- help you improve your understanding of people from different cultures who live in Britain today.

You can help by continuing to work hard and behaving well.

Best wishes

Brian Holmes Lead inspector

8 July 2008

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Lead inspector