

Stottesdon CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123504
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	314616
Inspection date	26 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Joyce Cox

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margret Lomas
Headteacher	Katie Jones
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	Stottesdon Cleobury Mortimer Kidderminster DY14 8UE
Telephone number	01746 718617
Fax number	01746 718167

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: improvements to the quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage and the impact of the actions taken to raise small groups of pupils' achievement in writing. Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation; the school's assessment records; observation of the school at work; discussions with pupils, staff, parents and governors; analysis of parental questionnaires. All classrooms were visited. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report

Description of the school

Situated in a very rural setting, the school serves the village of Stottesdon and the surrounding villages and hamlets. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, but varies greatly from one year group to another. The small numbers of pupils in each year group mean that the levels of children's skills and understanding when they join the school varies considerably. Over the last two years, a significant number of children entered the school with lower social, emotional and language skills than other four-year-olds nationally.

Pupils are taught in two classes of mixed age and ability, each class covering a whole key stage. The Key Stage 2 class has additional part-time teacher support. The headteacher has been in post since April 2006; prior to her appointment there was a period of two terms without a substantive headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Parents are correct in their view that this school provides their children with an outstanding education. One of the key reasons for the school's many successes is that the headteacher's inspiring leadership enthuses others to have the highest possible aspirations for the school and its pupils. In a very short time, she has skilfully built a staff team who are totally committed to school improvement and who strive for excellence in all that they do. All parents speak in glowing terms about the school's considerable achievements. One parent, summing up the views of many, wrote, 'The headteacher and her team provide a magnificent school environment, maintaining an excellent balance between the well-being of the individual and the delivery of an excellent curriculum which makes learning interesting and fun.' Others say that they are very impressed with 'the energetic and enthusiastic staff,' and the way in which their children 'have come on in leaps and bounds in the last couple of years'.

This is a school where every pupil is valued, everything is done to include them in all activities and they are made to feel special. Children in the Foundation Stage have a very happy start and make excellent progress, and most attain the expected levels for children of this age on entry to Year 1. Excellent achievement continues in the Key Stage 1 class, and standards are average at the end of Year 2. The outstanding achievement of pupils means they reach very challenging targets by the end of Year 6 and attain above average standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science. These standards represent especially outstanding progress and achievement for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who receive excellent support with their learning. A recent successful focus on improving a small number of pupils' writing skills has resulted in higher standards. A fundamental reason why pupils' achievement is excellent is that the quality of teaching throughout the school is outstanding. This has a considerable impact on pupils' learning and achievement. By pitching work and support precisely at pupils' own levels, staff ensure that all pupils enjoy their work and feel they are successful. There are impressive strengths in how work is planned and in staff's high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. The team of talented and highly competent teaching assistants provide excellent support to teachers and pupils. They are much valued staff members and confidently take responsibility for leading activities such as working with the Reception children and with pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Staff make excellent use of precise assessment information to record and track pupils' progress. This information is also used extremely well to set challenging targets for pupils to attain in tests at the end of all year groups. Staff and pupils work very hard to ensure these targets are met. Pupils are very clear about what they are to learn in lessons and are developing a good understanding of what they need to have achieved by the end of a lesson. The next step is for staff to help pupils to identify the ways in which they learn best so they are involved even more in their learning. Teachers' marking is excellent and clearly tells pupils how they can improve their work. Relationships and pupils' behaviour are exemplary and, consequently, pupils are extremely motivated and learn exceptionally well. Teachers' meticulous planning builds very effectively on pupils' prior knowledge and differing needs and ensures that lessons are lively, exciting and enjoyable. Pupils are understandably very proud of their school and their teachers, saying such things as, 'Lessons are fun, pupils are very kind and if something goes wrong and somebody is upset, the teachers and children help them feel better.'

Pupils say they love school, which is reflected in their good attendance. They get on extremely well together and enjoy taking considerable responsibility for helping to run the school. Pupils

are very keen to be school councillors and they raise considerable amounts of money for charity. They designed the extremely attractive garden area and enjoy giving their classmates feedback on pupil questionnaires and choosing books for the new library. They also made excellent suggestions for improving school assemblies. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and lies at the heart of the school's work. Their good skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and exceptional personal development prepare them exceedingly well for later life and learning. Success in national tests has not compromised the wider curriculum, which is outstanding. It is highly effective and relevant in meeting pupils' diverse needs, aspirations and capabilities. Imaginative links between subjects make learning practical, relevant, challenging and exciting. Good improvement has been made to the provision for ICT, which is now used skilfully in all lessons by staff and pupils to extend learning. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in the wide range of exciting clubs and enrichment activities.

Pupils' personal development is excellent because of the superb care, support and guidance provided by the school. Parents who have children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or life-threatening illnesses appreciate the 'fantastic support, both educationally and emotionally, from the compassionate staff.' Adults are highly effective at tracking and supporting pupils' personal and academic progress to ensure that pupils can achieve really well. Pupils have an exceptionally good awareness of, and commitment to, personal safety and healthy and active lifestyles. Excellent links with a wide range of outside agencies and parents ensure the best possible support to further the pupils' academic and personal well-being.

Much of the school's success is due to the dynamism and dedication of the headteacher. She provides excellent direction and has exceptionally high expectations for herself, the pupils, staff and governors. Parents hold her in high esteem, and staff and governors share her very positive approach and enthusiasm. Governance is good. Governors are provided with high quality termly reports from the headteacher, who skilfully relates all improvements and actions to the well-constructed development plan. Outstanding leadership and management are evident in rigorous and accurate evaluation of every aspect of the school's performance, which leads to considered and highly effective action. Teamwork is very strong. The hard work and dedication of the headteacher and her staff have ensured considerable improvements since the school's last inspection which have proved exceedingly effective in improving pupils' achievement and enjoyment. Consequently, the school demonstrates an excellent capacity to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Good leadership and management, excellent teaching and loving care ensure that most children attain the expected levels for their age on entry to Year 1. Provision for the Reception children in the Key Stage 1 class has improved dramatically since the last inspection. Children now have many opportunities to explore, investigate and discover together. Staff know children and their families extremely well and ensure that individual needs and interests are taken into account so that children achieve exceptionally well. The teaching assistant makes learning fun and enjoyable. Staff plan an interesting and exciting range of activities both inside and outdoors and make excellent use of the attractive school garden. Adults are readily at hand to extend and develop children's learning and language, for instance by using good questions when acting out a story about bears, involving children pretending to be polar, koala and panda bears. Staff work as a highly effective team and have excellent knowledge and understanding of the personal

and learning needs of young children. This ensures that children make exceptional progress in their personal, social and emotional development and their general well-being. The curriculum is excellent and provides constant pleasure, excitement and adventure. Parents feel that 'the mixed age group classes bring great opportunities and benefits to our children' and one said she is 'astounded and thrilled at the speed with which our child is learning to read. Teaching the letters and sounds every day is really working.'

What the school should do to improve further

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- Enable pupils to identify the ways in which they learn best so they are involved even more in their learning.

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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?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

27 February 2008

Dear Pupils

- Inspection of Stottesdon C of E Primary, Cleobury Mortimer DY14 8UE Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you really enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. I agree with all your parents that your school gives you an excellent education. These are the things I liked best:
- your behaviour is excellent and you are really keen and enthusiastic about your learning
- you are all doing well in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and in many other subjects as well
- you take very seriously the importance of eating healthily at school and taking lots of exercise and you are brilliant at helping the adults to run the school
- teachers and teaching assistants make learning exceptionally interesting and fun for you, and you know how to improve your work from super marking and target setting
- you have an outstanding and varied curriculum and the special activities arranged to enhance it are excellent
- anyone who needs extra help with their work is always given it
- the teachers and staff take excellent care of you while you are in school
- your headteacher leads the school extremely well. The headteacher, staff and governors have lots of good ideas to make the school even better. I agree with their ideas. It is also important that you are helped to think about how you learn best. I am really glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard.

All the very best for the future

Joyce Cox Lead inspector