

# Stiperstones CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123519
<b>Local Authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314622
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Chris Grove

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>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	48
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Penny Thornton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Caroline Gardner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Snailbeach Shrewsbury SY5 0LZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01743 791207
<b>Fax number</b>	01743 791207

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Stiperstones C of E Primary School is a small village school. In recognition of its work, the school has been awarded Safer School status, and has secured Active Mark. The present headteacher took up the post in January 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Stiperstones C of E Primary is a good school. The very positive ethos rests on deeply held Christian principles about the value of every child. As a consequence, school staff show great warmth towards pupils, and take good care of them. The school focuses as much on pupils' personal as on their academic development. It is not surprising therefore that the pupils are happy, and greatly enjoy being at school. There is a good partnership with parents, who readily endorse the school's values. One satisfied parent wrote that her children were very positive about Stiperstones C of E Primary School because 'the staff are dedicated and give more than is expected of their time to improve the school and ensure the children have a well-rounded education.'

The school's inclusive ethos and the good quality of pastoral care lead to pupils' good personal development, including their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. One school council member said that he would recommend the school because 'the teachers actually care for you like your parents.' In lessons, pupils behave well and are attentive and responsive to their teachers and other adults, with whom they have very good relationships. In the playground and around the school, pupils are friendly and considerate towards others. The very positive atmosphere set in the Foundation Stage provides a secure basis for children's development, and for their subsequent success.

Pupils' achievement is good. When they enter the school, their levels of prior attainment are variable from year to year, but are broadly average. Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage to achieve age-related expectations. At the end of Year 2, standards were above average in each of the last three years, and were significantly above average overall in 2007. Pupils continue to make good progress from Year 3 to Year 6. In the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6, standards have mostly been above average. In English, the school is aware that, although pupils' overall performance was good in 2007, results in reading were markedly higher than those in writing. Pupils make good progress because they feel secure in the school and are well taught.

The curriculum is satisfactory with some strengths, including extra-curricular provision. However, there are also aspects which could be improved, especially at Key Stage 2. There are limited links between the different areas of pupils' learning at present. This, in turn, leads to some missed opportunities, for example for pupils to make sufficient use of their writing skills in other subjects. There are also not enough opportunities for pupils to use their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) elsewhere in the curriculum.

The new headteacher is providing good leadership and clear direction. The partnerships with others, including local primary and secondary schools, the church and external agencies, are good. Since the headteacher's arrival, good checking procedures have been introduced, with the result that the school has developed a good overview of its strengths and weaknesses, as a basis for making improvements. This demonstrates the school's good capacity to make further improvements.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The close-knit team has created a stimulating environment for the small number of children in the Foundation Stage. Staff exercise good care of them. Children receive some separate teaching,

which is well planned and lively. A good variety of activities is provided, for example to enable pupils to link letters to sounds and to develop good habits with letter formation in their handwriting. When the children are taught alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2, teaching assistants provide good support for their separate activities. Children are assessed on entry, and their progress is well tracked. Children exceeded national expectations in summer 2007, and made good overall progress, although their attainment in communication and early literacy was lower than in other areas. The school is alert to this issue, and has taken appropriate action. Children thus achieve well and join Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are in line with those normally expected. Good links are made with the adjoining, but separately managed, playschool, which shares the outside area. This school has rightly judged that improvements to this area are warranted.

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

- Raise the standards of pupils' writing at Key Stage 2, by providing better contexts and opportunities to write at length.
- Enrich pupils' learning by extending the opportunities to use their ICT and literacy skills in other subjects.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 2**

Results at Key Stage 1 in 2007 represented an improvement on previous years, with a particular strength in mathematics, where the number of pupils who attained the high Level 3 standard was above average. At Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils who reached the high Level 5 standard in each of English, mathematics and science was above average. Within the English results, however, pupils' very high attainment in reading masked their somewhat lower performance in writing. The school has responded by focusing more in its planning on improving all stages of the development of pupils' writing. At both key stages, girls' and boys' results were higher than their relative national performance. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same good progress as others. This is because of the good level of support provided, notably by teaching assistants.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes contribute well to their learning. They lead healthy lives through regular lessons in physical education and the good range of extra-curricular activities, and through healthy lunch provision. Pupils feel safe at school. The very good relationships with their teachers and support staff mean that they are confident to talk to a trusted adult, if ever they feel insecure. School council members are mature and thoughtful. They are pleased with their contribution to the school. The new equipment in the playground, the improvements to the library stock and the planned school shop all attest to the impact of the council. Pupils' good achievement in literacy and numeracy, and their good social skills make a positive contribution to their future economic well-being. However, this is also presently restricted by limited opportunities to apply ICT skills, or to develop financial and economic awareness. Levels of attendance are above average. In the Foundation Stage, children's personal, social and emotional development is also good.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The good rapport between teachers and their pupils leads to the very positive atmosphere for learning. Teachers plan well for classes with a wide range of ages. Tasks are well matched to pupils' prior attainment and are appropriately challenging for pupils at very different stages of learning. The school makes good use of teaching assistants to support the learning of pupils, including those with moderate learning difficulties, who consequently make good progress. Communication with, and encouragement of, pupils is especially good, and this helps to sustain their attention to their work. Good prior preparation and classroom organisation, combined with a good lesson pace, make for effective learning. A new policy on marking pupils' work has been implemented, but is not yet being consistently applied across the school.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The good work in personal, social and health education supports well the development of pupils' understanding of issues of health and personal safety, and this was recognised in the recent subject inspection by Ofsted. The swimming programme and French from Year 3 provide good extension for pupils. An example of good linkage between subjects was observed when pupils in Key Stage 1 did biscuit making and cooking as part of the theme of weddings. The activities provided a real context for weighing and calculating, and for language work, as well as focusing on food technology and science. The headteacher has already identified that such experiences could be provided more often in both classes, and accordingly is conducting a review of the curriculum. Curriculum enrichment, through termly themed weeks and visits and the range of extra-curricular activities, is very good, and is appreciated by pupils.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school has a strong commitment to pupils' well-being, and hence the quality of care and guidance is very good, as parents recognise. Procedures to safeguard pupils and provide child protection are rigorous. Any vulnerable child is sensitively monitored. Transition arrangements from pre-school and to secondary school are good. The school has improved the tracking of pupils' progress and the use of assessment information. The recently introduced target-setting arrangements are welcomed by pupils, who like the target booklets and are pleased with the challenge that they provide. However, the use made of the arrangement is not yet sufficiently consistent across the school.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 2

The headteacher has introduced good procedures to gain a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The emphasis on improving the quality of pupils' outcomes in literacy and numeracy, and better assessment and tracking arrangements formed the basis of the present school development plan. These focuses have been well judged. Improvements in

assessment and tracking, and also in the use of the accommodation and resources and the development of the school council, attest to the impact of the new leadership. Self-evaluation is good. Arrangements now enable the school to better promote equality of opportunity by tracking the progress of different groups of pupils, including any who may be vulnerable. The governing body fulfils legal requirements. As well as offering strong support, governors are providing good challenge for further improvement.

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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	2
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?	3
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

13 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stiperstones C of E Primary School, Snailbeach, SY5 0LZ

I would like to thank all of you, and your teachers, for your help during the inspection. I enjoyed seeing you at work in your classrooms and talking to you at playtime and lunchtime. Stiperstones C of E Primary is a good school and a happy place for children. One school council member told me that 'the teachers actually care for you like your parents,' which was a lovely comment. There are lots of other things that are good about your school. These are the most important ones:

- You have very good relationships with the teachers and other adults, and this helps you to learn well.
- You enjoy school, and you behave well indoors and outdoors.
- All the adults make sure all the children feel included.
- Your headteacher and teachers know what is good about your school and they also know how to make it even better.
- You are making good progress because of the good teaching.
- You like the Curriculum Weeks (like Geography Week), and all the school clubs.
- The school is getting good results in the Year 2 and Year 6 tests.
- Your mums and dads are pleased with the school.

I have asked the school to help all of you to make even better progress by:

- Giving you more opportunities to do longer pieces of writing in Years 3 to 6.
- Improving your enjoyment of learning by giving you more opportunities to use your skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and literacy in other subjects.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and taking full advantage of the improvements which your teachers will be making.

I really enjoyed my time in your school. I wish you every success in the future.

Chris Grove

Lead inspector