

# Stutton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124743
<b>Local Authority</b>	SUFFOLK LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	315041
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jill Bavin

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	82
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Derek Chartres
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Lynch
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Holbrook Road Stutton IP9 2RY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01473 328531
<b>Fax number</b>	01473 328531

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school serving a widespread rural area. There are very few children from minority ethnic backgrounds and even fewer who are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of children who find learning difficult is lower than in most schools. Far fewer children than usual are eligible for free school meals. The headteacher has been in post for just one year. His appointment followed a period of staffing turbulence. More than 75% of teachers joined the school during the last two years. The school has a long standing partnership with a school in Ghana.

## 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 and improving school. Some aspects of its work are outstanding. It is much appreciated by parents who say it is 'a lovely place to learn', 'exceptional' with a 'very friendly atmosphere.' Parents recognise its recent improvements and the key part the new headteacher has played in this. Children's achievement is good and improving as a result of good leadership, which has increased teamwork and clarity of purpose between staff. Teaching is now consistently good so children make good progress in their learning, reflecting the quality and commitment of all staff.

Standards vary from year to year reflecting the small group sizes. Most commonly, children join the school at expected levels of attainment. In 2007, children left Year 2 with high standards in reading and broadly average in writing and mathematics. Children left Year 6 with very high standards in mathematics, having made good progress in this subject. Well above average standards in English indicate good progress and just above average standards in science indicate broadly satisfactory progress. The new headteacher, ably supported by the chair of governors, has identified well-chosen priorities for development which account for improved teaching, curriculum and achievement. These improvements indicate the school's good capacity for further development. Currently the headteacher is carrying too many of the key subject leadership roles. This limits opportunities for staff to be involved in analysing the effectiveness of the school's work and steering its future.

All children enjoy an exceptionally rich curriculum which contributes successfully to children's impressive personal development. Through its ethos, and the activities it offers, the school successfully engenders an exceptional sense of personal and social responsibility among children. Children's attitudes to learning are outstanding. They find lessons fun because of the excellent opportunities they have to express their ideas, often through art and drama. They have a mature willingness to make healthy choices whether by reducing salt in their diet or increasing daily exercise. Their attitudes to each other and to wider social issues show remarkable consideration for their age. The caring ethos of the school and its strong pastoral care enable children to thrive. However, written targets for children in their books are unnecessarily cumbersome which undermines their usefulness. This is most extreme in English but is also evident in mathematics. Nevertheless, teachers regularly provide children with helpful written and verbal feedback and academic guidance is good overall.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Consistently good teaching means children make good progress in the Reception class. They make very good progress in Creative Development and Knowledge and Understanding of the World. Children are on track to reach just above expected levels of attainment overall by the end of the year. Well planned and well chosen activities, both indoors and outside, reflect a very good understanding of the needs of young children. The class teacher is calm and consistent and so helps children to understand the boundaries and expectations of school. Consequently, children settle quickly and happily into school routines and rapidly become ready to learn. Activities where children can exercise independence and increasingly share and negotiate together without direct adult intervention are particularly well planned. Sometimes modified expectations of different children according to their needs could be made more evident sooner

in the lesson. Parents are justifiably very pleased with the good start children receive to their education.

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

- Share responsibilities for leading and checking development in English, mathematics and information and communication technology more widely among staff.
- Simplify the way in which individual learning targets in English and mathematics are expressed and shared with children.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and improving due to better teaching. This means that throughout the school children now make consistently good progress in lessons. Children in Year 2 are on track to reach broadly average standards by the end of the year having made satisfactory progress over the last two years. Children in Year 6 are on track to reach well above average standards by the end of the year, having made very good progress from their starting points. The school has successfully increased the proportion of children reaching higher levels in all three tested subjects. However, such very good rates of progress in children's learning are not yet consistent enough to be outstanding. There is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups of children. Those who need extra help, including those with a statement of special educational needs, make equally good progress.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Explaining that children have different work without causing bad feeling, one boy told the inspector, 'everyone has something they find hard, it's nothing to worry about because everyone's different.' This exemplifies children's exceptional maturity and thoughtfulness in this school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children are justifiably proud of the friendliness within the school. They enjoy school enormously and feel entirely safe within it. Attendance rates are good. Parents are particularly impressed by children's levels of self-confidence. This was demonstrated recently by the entire school auditioning for a speaking part in the forthcoming production of, 'The Pied Piper.'

Most are highly principled young people who are vehemently anti-racist. Their understanding of the distinction between Black British and African visitors to their school is commendable for children from such predominately White British communities. Their sense of responsibility includes, but extends beyond, embracing a healthy diet and taking plenty of exercise. While happily assuming various roles in school and links with the local community, they feel equally strongly about taking responsibility for the environment. This is demonstrated by their extremely well-informed involvement in tree planting projects and their commitment to routinely saving resources. Their links with Ghana contribute to the oldest pupils taking the first tentative steps towards a sense of global responsibility for natural resources such as water.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and improving. Very good relationships between adults and children mean that children are highly motivated and behaviour management is undetectable. Adults know children very well: they consistently and conscientiously challenge children with differing needs within their class. This accounts for the equally good progress made by all groups of children, whatever their starting points. Nevertheless children sometimes spend more time working together than they need to and different levels of work could begin sooner in the lesson. Marking is helpful and children are involved constructively in judging how well they are doing. Individual discussions between teachers and children have been a key feature in improving writing between Years 3 and 6. When teaching is outstanding the pace of the activities is extraordinarily lively and from the first moments children are challenged at different levels.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The school provides an exceptionally rich diet of activities for all children, during and beyond the school day. Activities are planned very successfully to meet national requirements, ensure progress from year to year and support the school's current development priorities. This includes several imaginative activities to meet the needs of the most able children. The school empowers children by enabling them to pursue areas of particular interest, adding depth and breadth to their learning. This exemplary practice is hugely successful in promoting excellent personal development.

For example, the 'trolley making' project for the most able mathematicians evolved first into a whole school activity, with the most able guiding their peers, and then into a club. Eventually children paid 10p to ride on their 'trolleys' to support 'Children in Need.' Several arts projects contribute to highly stimulating links between subjects. Recently purchased laptops mean that the use of computers runs through various subjects so pupils gain skills and put them to good use. Children appreciate many sports activities and opportunities to participate, often successfully, in several competitive events.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Pastoral care is strong and accounts for the extent to which children trust the adults in school, feel safe and flourish socially. Provision for children who find learning difficult is good. The school manages potential risks well and arrangements to safeguard children are secure. Teachers respond frequently and constructively to children's work. The headteacher gathers detailed information about children's attainment and uses it well to track their progress closely, with a view to ensuring it is at least good. This information is shared with teachers, who in turn share learning targets with children. However, too many literacy and mathematics targets are shared with children in adult language, which means they do not remember them reliably or identify the most important. The school successfully promotes a positive learning environment in which children thrive.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has rapidly unified the new team of teachers. He has implemented change that is already successfully raising standards and achievement. A key feature has been the introduction of efficient systems for checking how well each child is doing, and using the information to set challenging targets for each child. Because communication within the school is now good there is a shared commitment to continued school improvement. Nevertheless, the headteacher is currently carrying too many key subject leadership responsibilities. The current deployment of roles does not enable subject leaders to play more than a satisfactory role in evaluating the school's work and initiating development. Governors are actively involved and so have a good understanding of the school's strengths and current priorities. While well informed and prepared to act as critical friends, they recognise that their written records do not fully reflect the extent to which they check how well the school is doing.

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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?	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?	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?	2
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?	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	3
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

16 April 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Stutton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Holbrook Road, Stutton IP9 2RY

I really enjoyed meeting you this week. Thank you for sharing your ideas and work with me so sensibly and for being so friendly. A special thank you goes to all the children who met with me in the library. I agree with you and your parents that you go to a really good school. I am not surprised that you enjoy school so much! Here are some of the good things I found.

- Everyone is making good progress in lessons.
- You are exceptionally kind and considerate to each other.
- You are extremely thoughtful about serious things, like taking care of the environment and treating everyone equally.
- Your teachers plan particularly interesting activities for you all and take care to make sure you are all challenged well.
- You do lots of good artwork and drama.
- There are lots of sports activities that you enjoy.
- The school is good at coming up with especially interesting projects for those children who find learning quite easy.
- You feel safe because you know all the adults care about your well-being.
- Mr Lynch leads the school well and is well supported by the governors.

I have asked Mr Lynch and the teachers to make your school even better by sharing out their jobs more fairly. I have also asked them to cut down the number of targets you have in English and mathematics and make them easier for you to follow.

I wish you every success in the future and hope you always enjoy learning so much.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin

Lead inspector