

Stratton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111983
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	325505
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2008
Reporting inspector	David Edwards HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	194
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Nichols
Headteacher	Phil Aldis
Date of previous school inspection	23 October 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	New Road Stratton Bude EX23 9AP
Telephone number	01288 353196
Fax number	01288359424

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils are from ethnic minority groups and none is at the early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. Approximately a third of all children who start the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the Reception Year transfer from a separately funded and managed Early Years setting hosted by the school.

The last inspection in October 2007 issued the school with a Notice to Improve because significant improvement was required in relation to pupils' standards and achievement and to teaching and learning.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Stratton Primary School is an improving school that provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The overwhelming majority of parents, who returned the Ofsted questionnaire, are happy with the standard of education provided by the school. As one parent commented, 'The school is a very happy place to be - all staff show kindness and consideration to all pupils - they make sure children come first.' This comment accurately reflects the positive attitudes inspectors found amongst staff and pupils at the school. In the past year the school has maintained a clear focus on improving the quality of education for all its pupils. At the same time, leaders have maintained the strengths of the school, in particularly the care and support for pupils and the provision for children in the EYFS. The school is continuing to demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Therefore, in accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Although leadership and management are satisfactory overall, there are significant strengths emerging within the leadership of the school. In the relatively short time that the new headteacher has been in post he has quickly gained a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and established good working relations with staff, pupils and parents. Ably supported by the deputy headteacher they have taken appropriate steps to monitor teaching and learning which is overall satisfactory. There is much good teaching taking place within the school. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved and lessons are stimulating and enjoyable for pupils. However, pupils are not provided with sufficient opportunities in lessons to take responsibility for their learning. Although children enjoy their learning there is insufficient rigour in lessons to accelerate pupils' progress beyond a satisfactory level, or challenge the more able pupils to achieve higher standards. Senior leaders are aware that the involvement of leaders and managers at all levels in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance is still in the early stages of development. Support from the local authority has enabled governors to be better informed to carry out their duties. Consequently, they are now providing more effective support and challenge to the school.

The majority of children start school with skills that are below expectations. However, they settle quickly to routines in the EYFS and begin to make good progress in their learning. This is because staff work creatively to promote children's personal development within a safe and stimulating environment. As one satisfied parent wrote, 'My child loves going to school. This is due to all the hard work put into making learning fun in such a caring atmosphere.' Currently, the school does not make the most of assessment information, particularly when pupils move between key stages. This has meant a slowing down in pupils' progress where pupils make only satisfactory progress in their work in Key Stage 1 and 2. As a result, by the end of Year 6, standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

The school is effective in its pastoral support and care of pupils. Procedures to ensure their health and safety are extremely thorough. The school is inclusive of all pupils and quick to identify and provide support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good links with other agencies in supporting pupils and their families further promotes the school's commitment to community cohesion. Pupils' behaviour is good. They thoroughly enjoy their lessons and are able to talk confidently about what they are learning. Pupils, along with their parents, appreciate the recently introduced strategies to celebrate their wider personal

achievements and the additional extra curricular activities on offer after school are popular and well attended.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle quickly because of the strong links established with pre-school providers and their families. Assessment is thorough and effective in establishing precise, personalised learning goals for individual children. As a result, children make good progress and develop the range of skills expected of five year olds in all areas of learning. Children's personal development and well-being are also good. Children play very well together and are often engrossed in their learning. For example, when pretending to prepare for Christmas by writing and delivering cards, decorating their home corner and shopping. Teaching is good and activities are carefully planned to make learning fun and exciting. As a result, children quickly develop good relationships with adults and behave well. Underpinning this successful learning environment is the strong leadership of the EYFS that ensures all staff carefully observe and record children's progress efficiently. The children's personalised learning diaries are a real strength in evidencing children's achievements and in maintaining the good partnership between home and school. Effective use is made of the well-planned outdoor environment in which health and safety are strongly emphasised.

What the school should do to improve further

- Involve leaders and managers at all levels in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance.
- Ensure that effective use is made of assessment information so that pupils' progress accelerates and they reach higher standards.
- Ensure that work set allows pupils to take more responsibility for their learning and is sufficiently challenging for the more able.

A small proportion of 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

Children start school with skills that are below that expected for their age. They make good progress in their learning so that standards by the end of Key Stage 1 are average. The progress that pupils make, by the time they leave school at age 11, results in standards that are in line with the national average and this represents satisfactory achievement overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection and the result of better teaching with a whole-school focus on writing and promoting literacy skills in the wider curriculum. Evidence from national assessments, the school's own data, observations and the pupils' work shows that standards in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 are now in line with the national average. Standards in science are good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

It is no surprise to find that pupils enjoy school with its many opportunities to learn and have fun. The development of a caring ethos means pupils' personal qualities and differences are celebrated. This has led to good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils feel very safe and appreciate the school's supportive learning environment that enables them to focus on achievement. Pupils know how to maintain healthy lifestyles and participate in regular physical exercise. They particularly appreciate the recent introduction of additional after school clubs. 'School is fun' commented one very happy pupil. Teachers' high expectations for pupils' personal development builds confidence in pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning. The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and courteous to adults and demonstrate high levels of concentration in lessons. A very effective 'buddy' system exists between Year 6 pupils and children in the EYFS. Pupils also make a positive contribution within the local community through concerts given by the choir and fund raising to support local and national charities. Pupils are developing a satisfactory range of literacy and mathematical skills to prepare them for their future lives. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and regularly monitored by the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

An appropriate focus on pupils writing throughout the school is now beginning to improve pupils' achievements in English. Teachers plan interesting and stimulating lessons that include the good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to make lessons more interesting and interactive. For example, through the use of web-site resources to access Victorian pictures to stimulate writing ideas. Although tasks are generally well matched to pupils' learning needs, the more able receive insufficient challenge in lessons. Teachers possess good subject knowledge and use searching questions to support pupils' understanding well. There are good opportunities for pupils to self assess their work and reflect on their learning. In a small number of lessons, where teachers spend too long explaining what to do, the pace of lessons slows and tasks do not always challenge some pupils sufficiently. As a result, there are too few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning or to work independently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a good range of stimulating and enjoyable learning experiences. There is a strong emphasis on drama to promote pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Mathematics and literacy are successfully integrated through well-chosen topics and consequently, pupils' understanding of their local environment and awareness of Britain as a multi-cultural society is enhanced. For example, in a Year 6 History lesson pupils effectively used their ICT skills to research local families connected to Stratton and Bude, following a trip to the local churchyard; whilst in Years 3 and 4 a recent trip to the village of Clovelly became the starting point for pupils to write their own tourist information leaflets. The curriculum is made inclusive by effectively supporting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, in some lessons there is insufficient challenge for the more able pupils. Visitors to the school

are a frequent source of inspiration and advice. The many after school clubs are varied and popular.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care and support have a high priority and are maintained through the good relationships established between the school and external agencies. Pupils are confident their teachers are there to help and support them. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rare. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and are effectively deployed through out the school. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning. Links between home and school are good. For example, one parent wrote, 'We are kept well informed of what our children are covering in class...and a weekly homework letter provides us with ways to support their learning.' The school is vigilant about pupils' health and safety. Statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils are in place.

Although the school has done much to improve the quality of academic guidance provided for pupils it is not sufficiently rigorous to promote the good progress for all learners. Whilst pupils are aware of their learning objectives in lessons, they are less secure in understanding precisely what they need to do as individuals to move their learning forward.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leaders have been successful in implementing strategies for improvement since the previous inspection. However, governors have not always made effective use of the data information that has been shared with them. Neither has this information been used effectively by leaders and managers, at all levels, to accelerate pupils' progress in lessons. The recently appointed headteacher has lost no time, however, in gaining a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Significant changes in staffing, along with good procedures to monitor teaching and learning, are proving to be effective in addressing the inconsistencies in teaching identified at the time of the previous inspection. The essential training provided for governors to help them understand their duties and provide appropriate support and challenge to the school has been successful. As a result, governors possess a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are beginning to play a more strategic role within the school.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

28 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Stratton Primary School, Bude, EX23 9AP

Thank you for welcoming us to your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit and valued the opportunities we had to talk with some of you and see you in your lessons. In return, I want to tell you what we thought of your school. We have decided yours is a satisfactory school. This means there are some good things to celebrate and some important areas we would like to see made better.

Here are some of the things we particularly liked about your school. When you begin school, you settle very well and enjoy your learning. Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. You work well together and include one another at playtimes. You are very fortunate to have such fantastic grounds to play in. You know how to keep safe and make sensible, healthy choices when eating. (I particularly enjoyed having lunch with you!) You have many opportunities to contribute to your local community and I really hope the Christmas concert was a great success. By the time you leave school in Year 6, you have made satisfactory progress in English and mathematics and good progress in science.

We have asked the headteacher to think about ways to make your school even better for you and in particular to take the following actions:

- Involve all your teachers in checking on how well the school is doing.
- Ensure teachers use your test results to set targets that will help you to achieve even better standards in your work.
- In lessons allow more opportunities for you to be responsible for your learning and that pupils who find learning easy are given more challenging work to do.

Yours sincerely,

David Edwards Her Majesty's Inspector