

Stretton Handley Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112859
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325702
Inspection date	9 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Marina Gough

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)	57
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	Mrs Margaret Gill
Headteacher	Mr Philip Searson
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Beresford Lane Woolley Moor Alfreton Derbyshire DE55 6FH

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in a small village and draws its pupils from the local and outlying areas. When children join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), their attainment is generally average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average as is the number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds and most are of White British heritage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that is showing firm signs of improvement in key areas of its work. Although progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory in many areas some planned developments had not been achieved by the time the current headteacher was appointed two terms ago. The school has a very welcoming family atmosphere and the pupils enjoy their time in school. Pastoral care is good, and pupils are happy to approach adults with any difficulties or concerns. Behaviour is good and older pupils set a good example for younger pupils and take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils have a good understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and know how to stay safe. They contribute well to the community of the school and to the local community.

On the basis of the end of Key Stage 2 national test results, standards over the last three years have been below average in English, mathematics and science. The progress of these pupils was not always adequate given their starting points. Higher attaining pupils were not always sufficiently stretched, and assessment information was not used well enough to identify particular areas where pupils were having difficulties. The new headteacher has wasted no time in tackling the issue of raising the attainment of all pupils. He has introduced an excellent and very thorough tracking system that enables staff to identify pupils who are not progressing at the expected rate. He has very effectively trained and deployed support staff to work with small groups, focusing on the specific concepts and skills that the pupils are struggling with. The attainment of the current Year 6 group is average and their recent progress has been accelerated considerably by the focused interventions that are now in place. Writing continues to be a whole-school area for improvement as this is an area in which boys especially have difficulty in developing their ideas. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are average in reading, writing and mathematics. Throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress, and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from the good levels of additional support they receive.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and is good in the mixed Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 class. Relationships between pupils and adults are a real strength and pupils of all ages take an active part in the learning process. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enhanced by a good range of additional learning opportunities including clubs and visits. However, most of the long morning sessions are given over to literacy and numeracy, thus reducing the amount of time that can be given to other subjects and subsequently reducing the opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in contexts other than literacy sessions.

The new headteacher has great vision for the school and has been most astute in his evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. He has the full backing and support of the staff and governors and so has been able to demonstrate significant improvements in key areas in a relatively short space of time. The headteacher balances his teaching commitment and his management responsibilities well. He sets a good standard through his own imaginative classroom practice and is able to motivate and energise the staff and pupils. Governors are very committed and willing but are at an early stage of monitoring the school's work and challenging the headteacher in their role as 'critical friends'. Likewise, the leadership roles of the other staff are currently underdeveloped. Despite the sometimes harsh messages the new headteacher has had to deliver, the staff and governors are on board and are keen to address the issues they know are outstanding. On the basis of the rapid and highly effective changes that have

already been put in place to reverse the decline in standards, the school's capacity for further and continued improvement is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 4

The provision for the eight EYFS children is inadequate. Although the Reception children settle in quickly and are happy in their learning some significant weaknesses mean that they do not achieve the standards of which they are capable of. Teaching is too prescriptive and so children do not have the opportunities they need to find things out for themselves, to make choices and decisions and to develop skills of independence. Not enough emphasis is placed on play as a vehicle for learning and many of the activities presented to the EYFS children are unexciting. The outside area is underdeveloped and does not extend the indoor learning environment. Children do not have access to large play equipment or wheeled toys and most resources are not easily accessible. Planning is weak and does not take enough account of what the children know, understand and can do. Although on-going assessments are made these are not used as a basis for planning the next steps in the children's learning. The welfare arrangements for the Reception children are satisfactory. The leadership of the EYFS is poor.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the teaching, curriculum and overall provision for EYFS children.
- Improve standards in writing by providing more cross-curricular writing opportunities, and by fully stretching the most able pupils.
- Develop the leadership roles of the governors and key staff so that the headteacher can devolve some of his many responsibilities.
- Implement the planned curriculum developments so that the available teaching time is used in a more imaginative way.

A small proportion of the 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

Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress is satisfactory overall for Key Stage 1 pupils and good for Year 2 pupils who are benefiting from consistently good teaching. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils sometimes struggle to produce extended pieces of writing and to develop their ideas, and writing continues to be a whole-school area for development. There are strengths in pupils' investigative science skills, and in their ability to solve number problems in mathematics. Currently, Key Stage 2 pupils are making satisfactory progress, although at times higher attainers could be further stretched. In the past teachers have not been sufficiently pro-active in using assessment information to identify pupils who are struggling so that they can receive additional support. This has led in recent years to standards dipping. Although this is no longer the case the full impact of improvements will not be seen immediately. The newly introduced target groups are having a positive impact on pupils' learning, achievement and the standards they attain.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is in line with that in schools nationally. Pupils behave well both in and around the school and understand how their actions impact on the well-being and happiness of others. Effective spiritual, social and cultural development underpins positive relationships at all levels. Pupils respond well to staff and treat one another with courtesy and respect. Pupils are sensitive to things of beauty, such as 'the egg left by the Snow Goose' and show respect for the school's Christian traditions and values. Through the work of the school council, playground buddies and mini play-leaders their involvement in local church and village events, pupils make a good contribution to the school and to the local community. They are well versed in the importance of healthy lifestyles and exercise regularly. They also have a clear understanding of how to be safe because they receive regular instruction in matters such as Internet safety, 'stranger danger' and similar topics. Satisfactory academic standards and positive attitudes to learning lay sound foundations for pupils' future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching, while mixed in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, marking is thorough and gives pupils pointers for improvement, activities are set at different levels, and lessons are presented in a lively and exciting manner that stimulates the pupils and makes them want to learn. Throughout the school, teachers make regular assessments of what the pupils know and can do but until recently were not making use of this information when planning lessons. Better use of assessment information is enabling teachers to match work more closely with the needs of individual pupils so that the most able pupils are fully challenged and those who are having difficulties can be given additional support. In all classes teachers make good use of the interactive boards to enliven teaching and learning and also encourage the pupils to use computers as a tool for learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is enriched by a good range of clubs, visits and visiting speakers which do much to strengthen the pupils' social skills and promote their cultural development and understanding of the community in which they live. The curriculum meets statutory requirements but the available teaching time is not evenly distributed across all subjects. The current practice of using the whole of the long morning sessions for literacy and numeracy limits the resources and time available for other subjects. This means that opportunities are limited for pupils to practise basic skills in different contexts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is strong. Christian values underpin all of the school's work. Parents describe this school as, 'a warm and welcoming school' where 'staff and children are all very friendly'. The school fosters the growing independence of pupils, encouraging their participation in local activities and appreciation of community cohesion. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are

thorough and parents comment positively on recent improvements to school security. Children of all ages have confidence in the staff who care for them. They are adamant that bullying is not a problem and know exactly who to turn to if problems arise. Checks on the suitability of all adults who work with the pupils fully meet government requirements. Academic guidance is good. Pupils have personal targets to guide their progress. However, because the setting of targets is relatively new pupils do not yet have a clear understanding of how targets can help them to improve the standard of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The recently appointed headteacher is a very effective leader who has tremendous vision, a real instinct for pacing change well and a clear understanding of how to raise standards. He has brought a renewed drive and urgency to matters of school improvement. His incisive evaluation of the school's performance highlights areas of weakness and the drop in standards since its last inspection. However, prompt and well-conceived action is already paying dividends. The headteacher leads from the front and presents a model of high-quality teaching in the classroom. He has introduced excellent systems for tracking pupils' progress and for setting suitably challenging performance targets. Along with a more systematic approach to monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning, these initiatives have already strengthened teaching and improved pupils' progress significantly. Other staff and governors are, rightly, keen to extend their roles in checking on standards and quality and in planning for school improvement. Though it is early days, training and preparation for these roles have already begun and give the school a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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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?	3
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?	4
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	4
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	4
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	4

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	3

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

9 December 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Stretton Handley Primary School, Woolley Moor, Derbyshire, DE55 6FH

I am writing to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school a short time ago and to let you know what we found out. We were pleased to see how well you all get on with one another and with the way in which older pupils help younger pupils. You know how to keep safe and healthy and are happy to go to ask an adult for help. Most of you are making satisfactory progress in mathematics and science, but the standard of your writing is not as good as found in other schools. Your teachers have already started to help you to improve your writing skills, but there is more to be done.

You get on very well with your teachers and answer questions well in lessons. Teaching is good in some classes, but some of the lessons are not as exciting as they could be. You enjoy the many extra activities that the school provides and I was very interested to hear about the juggling club. I agree with you that the morning sessions can be a little 'boring' with mainly mathematics and literacy sessions and I have asked your teachers if they can look at ways of making the days more interesting for you.

Your new headteacher has made a very good start in helping the school to improve, and the governors and other teachers now need to help him more with some of the changes that need to be made. There is a great deal of work to be done in the Reception class because these young children do not have enough opportunities to play. They have access to a lovely outside area but this is not used enough. Some of the activities they are given are not suitable for them.

We enjoyed listening to you practising for your Christmas performance and hope it went well.

Best Wishes,

Marina Gough

Lead inspector