

Stafford Leys Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119965
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327165
Inspection date	30 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

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	4–10
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	420
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	Grace Fox
Headteacher	Ed McGovern
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Stafford Leys Leicester Forest East Leicester LE3 3LJ

Age group	4–10
Inspection date	30 June 2009
Inspection number	327165

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- inconsistencies in teaching and progress between year groups
- the use of data by leaders at all levels in driving improvement
- the extent of curriculum provision for supporting pupils' personal development.

Evidence was gathered from analysis of school data, the school's self-evaluation, pupils' work, parent questionnaires, school policies, monitoring reports, and other documents. Lessons were observed and discussions were held with pupils, senior staff and governors.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Stafford Leys is a larger than average primary school. Pupils transfer to secondary school at the end of Year 5. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small number from other ethnic groups. Far fewer pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities than are found nationally and very few take free school meals. The school is a very stable community. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of three Reception classes. An independently run playgroup for children aged 2–4 uses the school community centre. A privately run before and after-school group is also based on the school site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Stafford Leys is a good school. It is a very happy, well run and harmonious community. Pupils achieve well in their academic work and demonstrate good personal development and well-being. This results from good provision in teaching, the curriculum, care, guidance and support. Good leadership and management, including governance, have ensured that the school moves from strength to strength. Pupils enjoy school very much, as demonstrated by their excellent behaviour in lessons. As one commented, 'The learning we get is brilliant.'

When children join Reception, their skills are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Pupils of all abilities make good progress overall in each key stage. After their good start in Reception, they transfer to Year 1 with standards a little above average. By the time they leave Year 5, the standards they reach are securely above average in both English and mathematics. Although pupils do well in English overall, they do better in reading than in writing. The school has identified that, in some classes, progress is satisfactory rather than good, especially in writing. Leaders are increasing the support given to teachers and strengthening the curriculum in writing to address this issue. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified early and skilled support is given so that they make good progress. Pupils with other types of difficulty are often helped to make excellent progress in their academic and personal development.

The many strengths in teaching include teachers' good subject knowledge, their use of a wide variety of activities to make learning interesting, and high expectations. Strong supportive relationships and good guidance have led to a culture where learning is valued highly. Pupils are involved well in knowing how to improve their work. One pupil explained, 'When you are stuck, teachers always help you and you are never alone.' Good assessment, challenging target setting and regular monitoring ensure that, in most classes, pupils do well and timely support is given to any who fall behind. This information about pupils' attainment is not used effectively by all teachers, however, and the quality of teaching is inconsistent. As a result, not all lessons meet the full range of pupils' needs.

Many links are made between subjects to make learning interesting and purposeful. These links support progress well in reading and mathematics and are becoming increasingly strong in writing. Pupils are suitably supported to develop the necessary skills in using information and communication technology (ICT). The school recognises, however, that the limited numbers of computers available makes it difficult for pupils to develop their ICT skills more fully, as a matter of course, in all subjects.

The otherwise rich curriculum develops pupils' skills in a wide range of activities. For example, plentiful opportunities for exercise and health education have led to an outstanding understanding by pupils of how to lead healthy lives. They particularly enjoyed the healthy lunches week, and many report changing their eating habits and taking more exercise as a result. There are many theatre trips, residential visits, visitors and projects to bring learning to life, and these include several opportunities for pupils to take part in school productions. The school promotes community cohesion well. Great care is taken to develop pupils' strong understanding of, and respect for, the backgrounds and beliefs of people who are different from themselves, both within school and further afield.

Pupils are helped to make a good contribution to the school and wider community. In school, they act as road safety officers, librarians, and recycling monitors for example. Through the school council, they have contributed to significant improvements to the outside play areas,

as demonstrated by the pretty willow shelter which provides shade. Regular fundraising and enterprise activities provide some good experiences in managing a budget. Pupils' good academic progress, above average attendance, and excellent caring social skills prepare them well for their next school and their future lives.

Parents are very positive about all aspects of the school. They particularly appreciate the progress their children are making, and the 'kind and supportive' teachers. A very small minority of parents expressed concerns about mixed age classes, but the pupils in these classes have progressed as well this academic year as those in single year group classes. Pupils are also positive and some commented that they would like to spend more time in school! Pupils feel that they are kept exceptionally safe, that they all behave very safely and they like the way all the different year groups get on so well together. Procedures to safeguard pupils meet requirements.

Good self-evaluation results in senior leaders knowing the school's strengths and weaknesses well and setting the right priorities for improvement. The information gathered to show where progress is good and where improvements are still needed is very thorough. This has resulted, for example, in improvements in the overall effectiveness of teaching. There has also been improvement in mathematics after this was identified as a priority last year. Challenging whole-school targets are being used well to raise standards further, and the capacity to improve is good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in Reception is good and provides a safe and very happy environment for the children. Strong links with parents and the many pre-school providers ensure that children settle quickly. Parents think very highly of the Reception classes. Children often arrive with skills in communication and literacy that are not as strong as in other areas but, through skilled teaching and support, they quickly catch up, making good progress. Effective teaching is based on very thorough assessment and good knowledge of the children and their different needs. Each child has a 'learning journey' to show evidence of their progress and this helps them to understand how well they are doing. There is a suitable range of imaginative games, toys and activities, including sand and water areas, to encourage exploration, to which children respond enthusiastically. In the mornings, however, children are not always given enough opportunity to learn for themselves and follow their own ideas, although the activities provided are very well organised. Children have plenty of fun with their learning, for example visiting the 'opticians' in role-play or working in their lovely garden, growing vegetables and looking at 'mini-beasts'. The outside areas do not, however, have a particularly wide range of equipment and are not accessible in wet weather. This inhibits the flow of learning activity between the classroom and outside. Children's good personal development is shown in the way they play responsibly on their own, discuss how well they are doing and willingly help each other. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Excellent liaison between the three classes ensures that progress of all the children is equally good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all teachers use assessment effectively to meet the full range of pupils' needs in all lessons, especially in writing.
- Strengthen opportunities for children in Reception to follow their own ideas and interests when learning, and improve the outside facilities to support this.

- Improve the opportunities for pupils to use ICT regularly in all subjects and increase the amount of equipment available for this.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
The standards ¹ 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/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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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	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 learners' needs?	2
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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 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	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

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

1 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stafford Leys Community Primary School, Leicester LE3 3LJ

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons.

Yours is a good school with many interesting things going on, just as you described. Senior staff work hard to keep developing the school and, for this reason, the standards you reach are good.

Skilled teaching helps you to make good progress in your lessons. As a result, you do particularly well in reading and mathematics. You really enjoy your lessons and always try to do your best. You told us that your teachers make lessons fun and interesting, and we can see that they help you to do well. We have, however, asked them to make sure that information about your achievements is used well to plan all lessons, so that work is set at a level which suits each one of you, especially in writing. We are sure that you will discuss this with your teachers and help them by working hard and sharing your ideas.

A good curriculum helps you to make good progress in your social and personal skills. We have, however, asked the school to give you more opportunities to use computers in every subject. We have also asked for improvements to the outside areas of the Reception classes so that the youngest of you have more opportunity to learn outside and to choose your own activities. You were keen to tell us that the school keeps you very safe and looks after you very well. We saw that you are helping yourselves by taking plenty of exercise and eating a healthy diet. Your behaviour is excellent, especially in the way you value learning and respect others, including those who have different beliefs and ways of living.

The responsibilities that you take on within the school and wider community are good, especially the way you look after each other, act as monitors and help with ideas such as improving the playground. It is good to know that you feel that you can make a difference. You clearly enjoy coming to school very much. We think that this, alongside your good quality basic skills, good attendance and mature attitudes to others, helps to prepare you well for your next school and future lives.

Yours faithfully

Patricia Potheary

Lead inspector