

Stockton-On-the-Forest Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121360
Local Authority	York
Inspection number	327468
Inspection dates	1–2 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Robert Robinson

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)	72
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	Mr Paul Hudson
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Mills
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Village Stockton-on-the-Forest York North Yorkshire YO32 9UP

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	1–2 April 2009
Inspection number	327468

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. The socio-economic circumstances of the area are more favourable than average. About a third of pupils do not come from the immediate local area. A below average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. An average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Stockton-on-the-Forest Nursery, the breakfast and after-school clubs operate from the school site but do not form part of this inspection. The school has gained Activemark, Artsmark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools and ICT Mark awards. There have been substantial changes of staffing since the previous inspection including the appointment of the headteacher who started in April 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Stockton-on-the-Forest provides a good education for its pupils. The good leadership and management of the headteacher and governors have enabled the school to make rapid improvement since the previous inspection. Equality of opportunity for all groups of pupils is promoted well. The school cares for, guides and supports all pupils well. The needs of vulnerable pupils are met effectively so they take a full part in school life. The school's friendly and welcoming ethos encourages a broad range of parents and children to join the school both from the immediate locality and further afield. Strong links with other schools, such as through the Sports Partnership, enable pupils to meet and enjoy the company of others from different local areas.

The recently introduced monitoring of pupils' progress shows that since the start of 2007 to the end of 2008 pupils made at least good progress in all classes from Year 1 to Year 6. Standards overall are broadly average by the end of Year 6. In the 2008 national tests provisional results indicate that standards were higher in English and science than in mathematics. Pupils achieve well. Their progress, including that of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good in Years 1 to 6. The rate of progress has accelerated in the past year resulting in rising standards. Teaching is now good throughout the school. This is a major improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching builds on a good curriculum. Lessons are planned carefully to match pupils' prior level of attainment. Questioning is used well to keep pupils alert as well as to check their understanding. Occasionally, particularly in mathematics, there is too much direct teaching rather than providing opportunities for pupils to learn by investigating in small groups or individually to consolidate and extend their understanding.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have a good grasp of how to live healthily and safely. They enjoy school and appreciate the wide range of sporting opportunities and other extra-curricular clubs. Attendance is above average. Pupils relate well to one another and to staff. They are proud of their school and assist well in its smooth running through the school council and the environment, healthy school, charity and enterprise committees. They understand how they can improve academically by using academic targets but do not have targets to help them improve further their personal development. Parents are pleased with almost all aspects of the school though a significant minority have some concerns about behaviour. They should be reassured that the overwhelming majority of pupils behave well. A minority of pupils have identified behavioural difficulties and are receiving effective support from the school and outside agencies to enable them to take a full part in lessons. Care is taken to ensure that occasional inappropriate behaviour does not adversely affect the learning of others. The religious education curriculum is effective in developing pupils' awareness of different religious groups in Britain today. The strengths in pupils' personal development and their good progress support their future learning well.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has the respect and support of governors, staff, pupils and parents. The school ensures that pupils take a central role in local village life as well as having a growing awareness of other national and international communities. The strengths in all aspects of its work provide the school with good capacity to continue to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children have a good start to schooling in the Early Years Foundation Stage because provision and leadership are good. The small numbers of children joining the Reception class are well prepared for learning because of good links with the pre-school providers. They quickly settle and gain confidence and understanding of school routines and are cared for well by older pupils who they work alongside for part of the school day. Children's skills on entry vary widely from year to year. Present pupils entered school broadly at age-related expectations. They had strengths in personal, social and emotional development but some weaknesses in aspects of communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. Relative to their starting points children achieve well in each area of learning, including personal, social and emotional development. Children reach age-expected standards by the end of Reception, and sometimes above, and transition into Year 1 is seamless. Teaching and the curriculum are good. The indoor and outdoor areas are used well to provide exciting and purposeful learning opportunities. Children's welfare needs are promoted well. Teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of children's academic progress and personal development through effective systems to check individuals' achievements. Detailed booklets, passed between home and school, keep parents and staff well informed of academic and welfare issues. Children behave well and are enthusiastic about their learning because of the appropriate balance of adult-led activities and child-initiated learning. This aids their good progress as well as their good personal development. On occasions, adults in the classroom do things for children rather than encouraging them to find out for themselves through challenging small-group activities. For example, in a small group the lead adult counted objects with individual children rather than developing the activity to involve all simultaneously in practising counting. Early Years Foundation Stage provision has improved substantially since the previous inspection. Parents praise their children's introduction to Reception. A typical comment is, 'We have nothing but high praise for the teaching and classroom support.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for practical investigations to improve standards in mathematics.
- Set targets for pupils so they know how to improve their personal as well as their academic development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Since the previous inspection, standards have been broadly average with English and science results being slightly above average. Inspection data shows that standards in the 2008 Year 6 tests in mathematics were broadly average overall but lagged behind those in English and science. This was because a lower than nationally expected proportion of pupils gained Level 4 in mathematics than in English and science. The success rate for pupils expected to reach Level 5 was much higher than predicted from end of Year 2 results. Standards at the end of Year 2 have been broadly average over the past three years. The small numbers in year groups at the end of Year 2 make comparisons between years and subjects unreliable.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and are pleased to have gained the Activemark and Healthy Schools awards. Weekly whole-school sessions, where pupils in individual classes discuss issues of importance to them, are deepening their awareness of safety. Specific instruction, such as pedestrian and cycling training, assists pupils' well-being when out of school. They are aware of the benefits as well as the dangers of using the Internet. Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. The vast majority of pupils behave well both in lessons and around school. They are very friendly with each other and are considerate to those with learning or behavioural difficulties. The school council stated, 'Bullying is not a problem and any minor problems are quickly sorted out.' All pupils are keen and effective members of committees which meet regularly to discuss ways to improve the school. Pupils are aware of what they should do to improve academically through target setting. However, targets are not set for pupils to guide and develop their personal development even more. The sound grasp of basic skills and good achievement successfully assists pupils' future economic well-being. In addition, their deepening understanding of local and other communities, including a growing awareness of major world faiths, supports their development of good citizenship.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. It is now good, which matches the recent progress of pupils. In most lessons pupils are actively engaged in learning and take pride in their work. This is reflected in the high standards of presentation of older pupils' work. Occasionally, teachers spend too much time instructing and insufficient opportunities are available for pupils to engage in individual and small group challenging tasks, particularly in numeracy. Teaching assistants are used well. They help effectively identified groups at all levels of attainment to speed up their learning as well as supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with specific behavioural problems. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's work through homework and curriculum weeks, such as the recent science week.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A well-designed and effective curriculum enables all groups of pupils to make good progress. The strong emphasis on developing basic skills in English is supported by carefully planned opportunities to practise and consolidate learning in other subjects. The mathematics curriculum has been reviewed recently to focus more closely on key learning objectives. However, there are insufficient practical activities and investigations to develop and embed learning. Visitors, such as during a recent focus on Sikhism, benefit pupils' understanding of other religions and faiths. Visits are purposefully planned to extend learning, such as on an annual residential experience. The good number of after-school activities, ranging from football to yoga are enthusiastically attended and appreciated by pupils. All Year 5 pupils benefit from learning to play the violin and tuition for other instruments is also available. Information and communication technology supports the presentation of work and learning in other subjects well. Links with other schools are embraced to benefit the curriculum, such as developing multimedia skills.

The school is actively involved in local events, such as the Village Carnival and the Festival of Gardening.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All health and safety, risk assessments and child protection procedures meet current government requirements. Good links are maintained with parents and outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as well as pupils with behavioural difficulties. Vulnerable groups are helped well both in classrooms and when appropriately withdrawn from lessons for teaching suited to their needs. Effective systems are in place to promote good attendance. The school has recently revised its policy for behaviour. It is well thought out and successfully encourages positive behaviour. Pupils are well aware and mindful of the behavioural rewards and sanctions. Throughout the school there is age-appropriate and consistent marking of pupils' work which clearly celebrates achievement as well as detailing the next step of learning. The guidance for older pupils is particularly useful to identify pathways for development in both English and mathematics. It helps to push on learning at a good pace. However, pupils do not have similar guidance linked to their personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and governors have astutely taken notice of the previous inspection recommendations to improve the school. The areas for improvement have been dealt with through rigorous monitoring and the development of teaching. The more able pupils are being challenged and older pupils are actively involved in checking their work and are reaching higher standards as a result. The monitoring of pupils' progress is now thorough and this information is used well to set targets for staff and pupils. Progress is now good and past areas of underachievement have been eliminated. The leadership team has a clear view of what it needs to do to improve further. Subject leaders are aware of their roles though most are new to their posts because of staffing changes. Staff are deployed well to assist all pupils.

In practice, the school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. The governors have set up a working party to agree a policy which draws together the school's good contribution to community cohesion. The school already has an extended-school coordinator who liaises with the village community. International links are well established with exchanges of emails and pen pal letters with pupils in schools in New Jersey and in Sri Lanka.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which 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 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**

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed the two days I spent with you. Your school gives you a good education because it is run well by the headteacher, governors and staff. They have done much to improve your school since the last inspection. Your progress has quickened and your achievement is good because you are taught well. You now get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception). Progress in Years 1 to 6 is good. Standards are as expected nationally in Year 6. In the Year 6 national tests in 2008 standards were slightly above average in English and science but average in mathematics. The school has improved the curriculum in mathematics and your progress is speeding up. To improve standards in mathematics further I have asked the school to give you more opportunities for practical investigations.

Almost all of you behave well in lessons and enjoy learning. A small number of you occasionally find difficulties always behaving appropriately but are being given good help to improve your conduct. You attend well so keep this up. You get on well together and you are courteous to visitors. You take on responsibility well for helping in the smooth running of the school. I was impressed that all of you are involved in committees to develop the school environment, healthy living, fundraising and enterprise projects. You understand your academic targets which are helping you to improve your work. However, you do not have similar targets for personal development so I have asked the school to set you targets to help you in this.

I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I trust that you will keep doing your best and working with the headteacher and other staff to help them to continue to improve the school. I wish you well for the future.