

Dronfield Stonelow Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112698
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	337990
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Glynn Storer

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mick Green
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Perkins
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors spent about a half of their time looking at learning. They visited a total of 7 lessons and saw the work of all of the school's regular teachers. Inspectors held meetings with pupils, governors and staff. They looked at policies, planning, safeguarding documentation and the school's data on pupils' performance. They also took account of the views of 74 parents and carers who returned questionnaires and questionnaire returns from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- attainment by the end of Key Stage 2, with a particular focus on standards in writing
- pupils' progress in Key Stage 2, with particular emphasis on the progress of boys and that of higher-attaining pupils
- the impact of improvements in provision and in leadership and management on pupils' learning and achievement
- governors' monitoring of the work of the school and arrangements for evaluating and improving the overall effectiveness of governance.

Information about the school

This smaller-than-average school is in a suburban setting, close to the Peak District. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, and of the very small percentage with minority ethnic heritage, very few are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also lower than that in schools nationally, although the proportion with a statement of need is about average for a school of this size.

The school has gained the following national and local awards: Healthy Schools; Eco Schools; Activemark; Music Quality Mark; Artsmark; the International Schools (intermediate) award and the local authority Anti-Bullying Excellence award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Dronfield Stonelow Junior is an outstanding school that provides excellent value for money. By the time they leave, pupils' attainments are significantly above average. Almost all current Year 6 pupils have already attained the expected standards for their age in English and mathematics and over half are firmly on course to reach the, above average, Level 5. Standards attained by the school's most-able pupils are exceptionally high. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6 and consolidate and build on above-average standards attained in Key Stage 1. Progress accelerates as pupils approach the end of Key Stage 2, where high-quality teaching and an excellent response from pupils combine to promote effective learning.

Pupils learn effectively because teaching in most lessons is good and the rest are outstanding. Lessons are characterised by teachers' high expectations of what pupils should achieve, challenging but highly enjoyable tasks and effective use of assessment information to inform planning and the targets set for pupils. Better teaching has been a priority area for development since the previous inspection and the school has come a long way. While pupils generally know their targets and are well motivated to succeed, there is still a degree of inconsistency in teachers' marking and in the quality of advice they provide.

Excellent partnerships in and beyond the immediate area enable the school to provide an outstanding curriculum. It gives pupils a tremendous range of rich and memorable experiences, which promote high levels of motivation and enjoyment, and encourage good standards across subjects. One pupil summed up the views of many: 'My school is great because the school trips are fun.' The curriculum also places a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' personal growth, and outcomes in this area are outstanding. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school as a community and to the community beyond the gates. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. High rates of attendance, strong basic skills and pupils' exceptionally positive attitudes to learning provide an excellent preparation for the future. Pupils have an exceptionally clear understanding of issues that affect their personal safety and that of others. They rightly feel safe and very well cared for. Excellent care for all pupils is based on effective engagement with parents and carers and strong links with other schools and support agencies. Pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable receive excellent care and support.

The headteacher and her deputy provide strong leadership. Staff morale remains high and there is a shared ambition to improve the school. Improved systems for checking on standards and quality and a developing culture of accountability at all levels ensure that self-evaluation is accurate and whole-school targets are challenging but realistic. There

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remains scope for subject leaders and governors to have more impact on improvement planning by collecting first-hand evidence about whole-school and individual pupils' performance. Nevertheless, senior leaders have maintained good standards of teaching and learning by managing staff turnover issues effectively. The school's record of improvement since the last inspection is good, especially in developing high quality curriculum provision. This record, together with effective and improving management procedures, demonstrates good capacity for sustained improvement in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Give subject leaders and governors a more prominent role in checking on standards of attainment and the quality of provision so they have more impact in planning for school improvement by:
 - ensuring that subject leaders check the quality and consistency of teachers' marking and the advice that they give to pupils
 - extending governors' monitoring to include joint classroom observations with senior staff and more regular reviews of pupils' work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

In the most recent Year 6 national tests, attainment was significantly above the national average. The school's comprehensive assessment data, lesson observations and the work in pupils' books indicate convincingly that attainment continues to be well above average. The school's most-able pupils far exceed the standards normally expected of 11-year-olds. Standards in writing are slightly lower than those in reading and mathematics. The school has introduced successful measures to raise writing to the higher levels reached in reading and mathematics and the gap is closing. Boys and girls of all abilities and ethnic backgrounds are making good progress. About a third of the current Year 6 group has already exceeded the nationally expected rate of progress - part-way through the school year. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those at an early stage in learning English form highly constructive relationships with support staff, learn confidently and make good progress. One parent commented: 'The support given and the rate of achievement are immense.'

Most pupils behave extremely well and show high levels of enjoyment in their work. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond consistently well in lessons. Their enthusiasm, determination to meet challenging targets and their ability to work both independently and collaboratively contribute to their successful learning. Regular opportunities to undertake outdoor and adventurous activities give pupils an excellent understanding of aspects of personal safety. Their play also reflects a keen awareness of the need to consider the safety of others. Pupils' excellent contribution to the school community is shown in their roles as school councillors, playground buddies or 'gold tops', and by their enthusiastic participation in eco projects and school events. Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding of the needs and interests of the local community and of issues that affect the wider world and make an active contribution to

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both. Pupils' social and cultural development is particularly strong because pupils gain an in-depth understanding of the richness and diversity of modern society and of how to become good citizens.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers create a welcoming and supportive environment in all classrooms. As a result, pupils are happy in school and participate willingly in learning activities. Secure subject knowledge and the effective use of aids, such as the interactive whiteboard, make teaching clear, authoritative and engaging. Teachers generally make good use of on-going assessment, for example, in raising standards in writing. Their marking and evaluation of pupils' work strike an effective balance between encouragement and clear 'next steps' pointers on how to improve. This practice is also developing in mathematics and is beginning to extend to other subjects. However, current practice remains inconsistent across the school. Most lessons move at a brisk pace, tasks are closely matched to pupils' varying abilities and teachers are ever alert to opportunities to stretch pupils to the next level of performance. Pupils rise to the challenge and learning is

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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highly effective. In a few instances, teachers do not carry through their planning into the running of the lesson and so, at times, their teaching does not bring the best out in the pupils.

The outstanding strength of the curriculum lies in the wealth of memorable and, at times, inspirational experiences that it provides for pupils. A recent project drawing in elements of history, geography, citizenship, cultural development and much more, began with a visit to London - Houses of Parliament, Natural History Museum and a live theatre show - and ended with pupils hosting a visit from their local MP to discuss issues affecting the school and local community. Because these experiences meant so much to the pupils, the quality of their resulting work was very high. This example is typical of the school's approach to curriculum planning and goes a long way towards explaining the outstanding outcomes that pupils achieve. The curriculum is securely based on the needs and interests of pupils, because staff frequently ask them what they would like to learn. Strong partnerships, such as that with Derby Open Centre, ensure that the curriculum is also outward looking and brings a distinct global dimension that strengthens moral, social and cultural aspects of learning.

Care for the well-being of staff, pupils and their families is high among the school's priorities. Pupils express high levels of confidence in staff to deal effectively with any problems that arise. Staff work hard to build positive relationships, and good levels of engagement with parents and carers enable the school to respond promptly in times of need. The quality of this response is further strengthened by the school's extensive links with outside professionals, not only from the world of education, but also from social services, health and community support agencies. Parents and carers are virtually unanimous that the school keeps their children safe and comment positively on the quality of care and support that they or their children have received. One parent wrote: 'My daughter came to Stonelow as a shy, unconfident child with a history of bullying issues. Within the space of a few months, she had transformed into a happy, confident child that loved coming to school.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Under the highly committed leadership of the headteacher and deputy, the school has improved substantially since its previous inspection. Staff at all levels share the headteacher's ambitions for the school and the effective management of teaching and

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learning ensures that all know what they are responsible and accountable for. The school has put in place effective systems for tracking pupils' progress.. Subject leadership is also stronger, although subject leaders are yet to embark on a full programme of lesson observations. Governors strike a good balance between support and challenge and use their professional and community experience to good effect in supporting the school. The governing body reviews its own performance and seeks ways of improving governance. However, at present, governors do not collect enough first-hand information to give them a strong voice in matters of school improvement. Thorough safeguarding procedures ensure the suitability of all adults who work with pupils and provide for regular staff training on matters relating to child protection. Supervision and the ways in which staff deal with minor day-to-day incidents are generally good, although the quality of the recording of such matters is somewhat inconsistent.

The quality of provision and current outcomes for pupils show that the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination effectively. The school's positive engagement with parents and carers and its exceptionally constructive partnerships both within and beyond the world of education permeate its work. They are particularly influential in providing exceptionally good learning opportunities and in underpinning arrangements for care, guidance and support. The school's promotion of community cohesion is effective. An in-depth enquiry into the nature of the immediate and wider communities gives the school a good platform from which to build excellent provision across the curriculum and to launch community-based initiatives. Consequently, pupils' understanding of and engagement with different sectors of the community has increased and the school has good opportunities to reach out to groups who benefit from its support. The school has begun to evaluate the impact of its work in this area but this evaluation remains at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

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<p>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</p>	<p>1</p>
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Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive in their views about the school. Individuals raise the occasional concern but these do not constitute a significant body of dissatisfaction with any specific area of the school's work. Some parents and carers, understandably, express concerns about staff turnover. The school is managing this issue well and so the overall quality of teaching remains good. Several added positive comments. These tended to focus on the quality of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, good communication between home and school, examples of high-quality teaching and the strength of leadership. Inspection evidence largely supports these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Dronfield Stonelow Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 136 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	62	28	38	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	68	24	32	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	47	35	47	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	53	29	39	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	47	35	47	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	43	35	47	6	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	55	31	42	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	33	45	33	45	4	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	49	34	46	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	39	37	50	2	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	34	37	50	5	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	42	36	49	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	54	27	36	7	9	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



Thursday 18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Dronfield Stonelow Junior School, Dronfield, S18 2EP

Thank you for making my colleague and I so welcome and for taking time to talk to us and to answer our questions when we visited your school. Thank you also for taking part in the pupil questionnaire. We enjoyed talking to you. The things that you told us showed us that you think you go to a wonderful school - and we agree. I particularly enjoyed seeing how well you play together at lunchtime and seeing the Year 3 film 'premiere'. My colleague was impressed by the answers that the lunchtime discussion group gave, so well done. I thought that you would like to hear more about what we found out.

Most of you are making good progress in English, mathematics and science and the standards you reach are above average.

Those of you who find learning difficult progress as well as everyone else.

You have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourselves and others safe.

Your behaviour and the way that you respond in lessons are excellent.

You make an exceptionally good contribution to the school and wider community.

Staff always help you if you have problems and take particularly good care of anybody who is having a hard time.

The headteacher, staff and governors are successfully improving the school.

Because everybody wants Dronfield Stonelow Juniors to be as good as it can possibly be, I have made a suggestion that should help it to improve further. This is what I would like the school to do:

Give governors and subject leaders more opportunities to see how well everybody is doing, so that they can really help the headteacher to find the things that still need to be improved.

You can all help by continuing to do your very best in every single lesson.

Yours sincerely

Glynn Storer

Lead inspector

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