

# Stoke Hill Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113087
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	338092
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Sadler

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	310
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alice Hutchings
<b>Headteacher</b>	Roy Souter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 December 2006
<b>School address</b>	Stoke Hill Exeter Devon EX4 7DP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

The inspectors visited 19 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including records of pupils' progress, development planning and those relating to keeping pupils safe. The responses of 66 parents to the questionnaire were analysed, along with those completed by staff and pupils.

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

- the progress of different groups of pupils, especially in English and mathematics
- the effectiveness of strategies to enable pupils to understand their own progress and how to improve their work, including the setting and monitoring of targets
- the quality of care, guidance and support, especially in the after-school club and in ensuring pupils' views are heard
- the effectiveness of partnerships, especially with parents and with other schools, and in supporting the school's contribution to community cohesion.

## Information about the school

This junior school is larger than average and serves a suburban area to the north of Exeter. The proportion of pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is also broadly average, as is the proportion at an early stage of learning English. The parents of many of the latter group are undertaking assignments at the University of Exeter, and these pupils often remain at the school for relatively short periods of time.

The great majority of pupils received their early education at the nearby infant school. For budgetary reasons, in September 2009, the school reorganised teaching so that Years 4 and 5 are now taught in mixed-age classes. The governors manage a breakfast club and have recently taken on the management of the after-school club. The school holds a number of awards, including the International Schools and Healthy Schools awards.

**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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school, as it was at its last inspection in 2006. It has improved in a number of respects. Attendance is high, reflecting the fact that pupils really enjoy coming to school. The governing body is outstanding. As well as holding the school to account, it has not flinched from the difficult decisions needed to secure the school financially, and is actively seeking ways to improve local educational provision through partnerships with other schools. The guidance pupils receive on how to improve their work has improved. They know their targets, and teachers' marking shows them how to make their work better. Older pupils told inspectors they would now like more information about how their work relates to national standards.

After disappointing results in national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 in 2007, the school has worked hard to improve standards. There was significant improvement in 2008, and preliminary results for 2009 show further improvement, especially in English, where nearly half of pupils attained the higher Level 5. These are above average standards from pupils' broadly average starting points, and represent good progress. Inspectors carefully examined the progress of groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs, and found that all pupils are making good progress. The progress of pupils at an early stage of learning English is especially good.

The good teaching is founded on the very good relationships and behaviour that are evident in all classrooms. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, and generally plan work that is matched well to their needs, although there is sometimes too little explanation of what pupils should be learning, rather than of what they are doing. On some occasions, the pace of teaching is too slow and wastes pupils' time. Pupils are given demanding writing tasks in a range of subjects, but in some cases the quality of their work is limited by poor handwriting skills. Pupils enjoy the varied curriculum, recently improved by a range of exciting activities in the school grounds, by the introduction of Spanish, and by the purchase of laptop computers enabling pupils to have individual use.

Individual pupils' needs are well known by staff and as a result they are cared for well. They are given a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy, although some choose not always to adopt a healthy diet. They have a good understanding of issues such as the dangers of drugs and tobacco, and the possible dangers of electronic communication.

School leaders and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have taken effective action to improve the latter, for example in

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tackling weaknesses in reading, and in the progress of some pupils with special educational needs. These successes demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve further. Recent changes in leadership mean that some middle leaders are inexperienced in their new roles. However, they have a willingness and capacity to learn, and are led effectively by the experienced headteacher. The school has developed good partnerships with parents, with the partner infant school, and with external agencies such as the education welfare service. As well as their excellent forward vision for the school, the governors are rigorous in ensuring that statutory requirements are met. For example, all requirements to keep pupils safe are in place and are of good quality, and the understanding and respect shown by pupils to others and to adults, further enhanced by the International Schools Award, demonstrates the school's good contribution to community cohesion.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve teaching so that all lessons have features that are found in the best by:
  - ensuring that all lessons are conducted at a brisk pace to ensure that pupils' time is not wasted
  - ensuring that pupils always understand what they are learning, rather than simply what they are doing
  - replicating the best practice found in the school in all lessons.
- Ensure that pupils develop the handwriting skills needed to write quickly and accurately.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils consistently make good progress in their learning and hence attain standards that are above average. By the end of Year 6 in 2009, almost all pupils had made at least the expected progress in English and mathematics and the large majority had attained at least the nationally expected standards in these subjects. The proportion attaining the higher Level 5, especially in English, is significantly above average. Evidence of these above average standards was seen by inspectors, for instance in Year 6 geography when pupils discussed reasons why parts of Exeter are prone to flooding, and in Year 4 and 5 mathematics where pupils showed instant and accurate mental recall of their seven and nine times tables. Written work is generally of good quality, although its length and legibility is in some cases limited by pupils' weak handwriting skills.

Pupils' behaviour is consistently good, especially in lessons, where they listen carefully and collaborate well. They say there is little bullying, and that any which occurs is handled well. They know of the importance of exercise and healthy eating, although some still choose sweets and snack food for their packed lunch. Nevertheless, the school council is keen to improve the healthiness of school meals and the school's eco-friendliness, and it has a number of good ideas to do this, reflecting pupils' good contribution to the community. The school is successful in promoting understanding

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between pupils of differing backgrounds. 'She learnt English in a year!' said a White British pupil of his Korean classmate, with pride and amazement. This comment also reflects well the success achieved by pupils at an early stage of learning English, and the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.

Attendance has improved and is now high, with persistent absence virtually eliminated. This reflects not only pupils' enjoyment of school, but the robust approach of the school in ensuring that a small number of parents are made aware of the educational and legal consequences of poor attendance. This, together with the well-rounded development of a wide range of skills, contributes to the good development of the skills pupils will need in later life.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently good. Teachers plan tasks that match the needs of the pupils. This is true for the lowest and highest attaining pupils, and for those at an early stage of learning English. Pupils who need it get good support from teaching assistants. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, who respond by behaving very well and following

<sup>1</sup> 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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instructions carefully. Teachers use resources such as information and communication technology (ICT) well, and work is routinely marked with helpful comments designed to improve it. Pupils also assess their own and each other's work, which helps their understanding of the next steps they need to take. Weaknesses occur in isolated lessons, for example when pupils are not clear about how an activity is intended to help their learning, or when unnecessarily long explanations by the teacher slow the pace of learning.

The school has set itself a target for 20% of teaching to take place outdoors, mainly in the interesting and varied grounds. In one excellent lesson, Year 6 pupils planned the building of a bridge, then did so outside. There was excellent attention to health and safety, and pupils rapidly developed their skills of problem-solving and collaboration. Other good features of the curriculum include good opportunities to learn about the range of world cultures, such as through cooking demonstrated by parents from minority ethnic groups, and opportunities to develop skills through a range of subjects. Weaknesses occur when pupils spend too long on activities such as unsupervised reading.

Pupils say they feel safe in school, and parents agree that their children are cared for well. The good care pupils receive in school is enhanced by the breakfast and after-school clubs. The governors recently took on the management of the latter following dissatisfaction with the provision, and recent improvements are clear in the environment of the base and the range of activities on offer. This further enhances a good range of clubs and other additional activities.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Leaders and managers have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have made an accurate analysis of its current quality. Planning and performance management are robust, with challenging, measurable targets based on improved progress by pupils. Progress is analysed in detail so that support can be given to any pupils that fall behind, or action taken if this applies to a group of pupils, as was successfully identified and tackled in 2008 for those with enhanced provision for their special educational needs. Inexperienced leaders and managers are receiving the necessary training so that they can, for example, monitor more accurately the quality of colleagues' work. The excellent governing body has taken active steps to enhance

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collaboration with other schools, especially with the partner infant school. Partnerships with secondary schools, while good, are necessarily more distant due to the large number of schools to which pupils potentially transfer. Governors have audited the school's good contribution to community cohesion and are preparing an action plan to improve this further. The high priority given to the necessary checks and policies ensures that pupils are kept safe and that child protection procedures are robust. The inclusive ethos of the school and the diversity of its community ensure that equality of opportunity is well embedded. For example, isolated uses of racist language by pupils are rigorously monitored and dealt with.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Views of parents and carers

A large majority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire were pleased with the education their children are receiving. Many commented on the good additional support and the high level of care their children had received. A minority felt they were not given enough information about their child's progress, or about how to help them prepare for secondary education. Some reported that the quality of information varied from class to class. While inspectors found no direct evidence to support these views, they are matters the school should examine further.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stoke Hill 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 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 310 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	47	35	52	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	33	50	31	47	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	36	36	55	5	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	30	39	59	4	6	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	25	38	39	59	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	39	35	53	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	46	35	53	0	0	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)	21	32	32	49	9	14	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	32	38	58	7	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	33	37	56	3	5	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	33	38	58	4	6	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	24	36	38	58	3	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	41	35	53	4	6	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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



05 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stoke Hill Junior School, Exeter, EX4 7DP

We enjoyed meeting you when we visited your school. We should like to thank those of you who gave up your time to talk to us. Yours is a good school, with some outstanding features. We especially liked your good behaviour in lessons. You know how to stay healthy and safe, and the adults look after you well. The canteen offers you healthy food, but some of you prefer sweets and snacks! Your attendance is very high, which shows how much you enjoy school, in spite of the 'bug' that was going round when we were there.

You make good progress in your work and reach above average standards by the time you leave Year 6, although your handwriting could be improved. Year 4 and 5 really know their times tables! You also know and understand your targets, and some of you make helpful comments about each other's work. We thought the lesson where Year 6 built bridges outside was really good.

The head, staff and governors run the school well. They have lots of good links, especially with the infant school, and they prepare you well so you will feel confident when you go to secondary school. Your parents think highly of the school because the staff take good care of you and respect their views.

We have asked the school to do two things. We have asked them to improve your handwriting, and we have asked teachers to make sure you know what you are learning from a task, and to make sure time is not wasted by too much talking by the teacher. You can help by politely asking if you are not sure what you are learning from a task.

Good luck in the future.

Yours faithfully

Paul Sadler

Lead Inspector

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