

Stoke Damerel Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113287
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	338136
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Blanco Del Cerro
Headteacher	Richard Marsh
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 28 lessons with 14 different staff members, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's assessment and pupil tracking information, plans for improvement and examined 66 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- ' The progress and standards of pupils in all year groups, particularly in mathematics and science.
- ' Whether teaching and assessment are of sufficient quality to secure higher standards of attainment.
- ' The extent to which the systems to monitor and track pupils' longer term progress in science and mathematics are used to identify strengths and weaknesses and drive improvement.
- ' The effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels in monitoring, self-assessment and improvement planning.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage and only a small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups speak English as an additional language. The school has an above average proportion of children with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. Reception children are taught in two Early Years Foundation Stage classes. Before- and after-school provision on the school site is managed independently by a private provider and was not inspected as part of this inspection.

The school holds the National Healthy School Status.

The school was last inspected in February 2009 when it was made subject to a notice to improve. There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection, including the appointment of two class teachers.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. This is because Stoke Damerel Primary School is an improving school and is now providing a satisfactory standard of education. The quality of teaching has improved across the school since the last inspection and, although satisfactory overall, there is now a greater proportion of good teaching. As a result, pupils' attainment has improved and is now satisfactory. The local authority has provided effective support in helping to identify weaknesses and share good practice. These improvements have resulted in raising more able pupils' attainment in science and increasing the rate at which pupils acquire knowledge and skills in a range of subjects. However, pupils' mathematical understanding and grasp of calculation skills are relatively weaker.

More rigorous tracking of pupils' progress has resulted in a more realistic evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This information has been shared with senior leaders and subject coordinators who are now more aware of pupils' performance and are identifying any lapses in their progress more quickly. Furthermore, this information is used by a close and committed team of governors who, with the support of local authority advisers, have contributed to raising standards and have developed clear roles and responsibilities. In raising academic achievement, realistic self-evaluation and more accurate tracking of pupils' progress, the school's leadership has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Senior leaders with the support of external agencies have implemented improvement plans which have successfully addressed areas of weakness identified at the last inspection. Leaders at all levels have developed a clearer understanding of a range of strategies to monitor the progress of the school. However, on occasions, opportunities have been missed by senior leaders to adopt a more rigorous monitoring of progress. Leaders and managers are motivated to seek further improvement and provide a clear improvement plan focused on raising pupils' achievement in mathematics and science further.

The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to make satisfactory progress, but opportunities for them to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects are currently limited. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the outdoor provision does not fully engage the more boisterous children. Where pupils make good progress, this is because teachers use assessments well to modify lessons to match the abilities of all pupils. Occasionally teachers lack precision in their assessments and what they expect pupils to learn, resulting in slower rates of progress.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Produce a clear and achievable school improvement plan with a strong focus on raising achievement for all pupils by:
 - identifying regular monitoring activities for governors, subject leaders and the senior management team which are strongly focused on the progress that pupils make in lessons
 - detailing the specific actions and identifying the measurable gains in pupils' progress
 - using pupil tracking data to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of intended actions.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning from satisfactory to good by ensuring that teachers' assessments are effective in identifying individual pupils' progress and used to produce precise learning objectives that meet their needs by:
 - Develop cross-curricular links to further improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
 - Ensure the provision of outdoor activities fully engages Early Years Foundation Stage children in purposeful learning and development.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy their learning and generally try hard in lessons. They respond well when challenged to work against the clock; younger pupils quickly and enthusiastically identified a list of adjectives in a text when only given a few minutes. Pupils move around the school sensibly so that little time is wasted moving from one activity to another. In lessons, they enjoy opportunities to explain their ideas to other pupils and this helps them respond to questions and keeps them involved. They cooperate well in group work and as a result they learn to listen to others and improve their communication and social skills. Opportunities for reflection in assemblies help pupils to develop respect for others. These attributes, as well as satisfactory levels of achievement, help to prepare pupils suitably for the next stage of their education.

Pupils react positively where lessons are well planned and provide practical activities. For example, a carefully constructed crime scene helped pupils to develop a good understanding of scientific investigation. This lesson provides a good example of the school's focus on developing pupils' scientific knowledge, which has resulted in a greater proportion of pupils reaching higher Level 5 standards this year. Better teaching has ensured that pupils' progress in a wide range of subjects is satisfactory, although pupils continue to lack confidence in their recall of number facts and calculation skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good emotional and academic

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support from staff and other agencies. Pupils respond positively in well-paced lessons where assessments are used purposefully to match work closely to their needs. As a result, the majority of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is satisfactory; they are polite and generally respond appropriately to staff. Pupils explained that the equipment provided has helped improve playtimes but felt that behaviour at lunchtime was less satisfactory. Pupils understand about healthy exercise, with many attending games and sports clubs and reporting that they want to take action to improve their health. Attendance is average and fewer pupils than typical are persistently absent.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is matched to the needs of the majority of pupils and helps to satisfactorily promote their literacy and numeracy skills. Opportunities for pupils to learn and apply these skills and use computers to enhance their learning across the curriculum are more limited. Where pupils are given these opportunities, such as when they use

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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their mathematical skills to present and interpret data in science investigations, they make better progress. The curriculum provides good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities because it is adapted well to meet their needs. Teaching has improved because teachers have been given clear advice on how to make the learning for pupils more purposeful. As a result, lessons proceed at a better pace; pupils are expected to contribute and share their ideas and are often challenged to complete tasks in a set time. Teachers more regularly use their assessments of pupils' learning in order to adapt their lesson plans. However, activities do not always enable every pupil to learn as well as intended because there is a lack of clarity and precision to some of these tasks.

Support for more vulnerable pupils is well established and the school's procedures to monitor pupils' progress are helping to identify more quickly any individuals whose progress is stalling. The school works closely with education welfare officers to monitor attendance regularly and the impact is seen in reducing the absence rates of persistent absentees. A more focused approach to marking and the setting of academic targets is now satisfactory. They have become more consistent across the school and are having a clear impact in helping to improve pupils' writing skills.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leadership and management have improved in many areas and leaders and managers have a more accurate picture of the school's work. Assessments of pupils' progress are gathered with greater frequency and provide greater drive for improvement by raising teachers' expectations. Systems to track progress have been revised and are used more effectively to identify and respond to any fluctuations. Subject leaders are more aware of pupils' progress, have analysed end-of-year assessments and taken action to address weaknesses. For example, the subject leader in science has acted to improve pupils' understanding of experiments and investigations. A newly appointed and enthusiastic English subject leader has clear plans to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills and extend opportunities for writing. The school suitably promotes equality and inclusion, making good provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

A comprehensive school development plan, drawn up with the support of the local authority, has ensured that leaders have maintained a clear focus on improving the

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weaknesses identified at the last inspection. However, the school has yet to devise an action plan to further improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' attainment. Senior leaders and governors have conducted monitoring activities alongside external advisors. Observations of teaching and learning have begun to place a greater emphasis on the progress that pupils make in lessons. Occasionally, opportunities for leaders to monitor the school's progress other than at the times organised by the local authority have been missed.

The school has appropriate safeguarding procedures in place and works closely with other agencies. Governors are well organised and have clear roles and responsibilities which often match their personal areas of expertise and interest. They continue to provide strong support to staff and pupils and are increasingly holding the school to account for tackling weaknesses. They have helped to create a more cohesive school and local community. Governors have developed links with parents through the introduction of a parent support advisor and are intent on encouraging more active involvement of parents.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are helped to develop into independent learners, selecting activities and resources confidently. They arrive with skills and understanding broadly in line with expectations and make satisfactory progress across all areas of learning. By the time they join Year 1, the majority of children are working securely at age-related levels. Good systems are in place to track children's progress across all areas of learning and

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this information is shared well with all staff. Detailed records are kept of children's work, and parents' and carers' contributions are carefully recorded alongside, helping to strengthen the school's links with them. Children learn how to adopt healthy lifestyles and they understand that fruit keeps them healthy and they eagerly participate in physical activities. They show good understanding of rules to keep them safe, using scissors carefully and taking turns with resources.

With support from the local authority, leaders and staff have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and to ensure that the curriculum is more closely matched to children's levels of progress. Leaders have an accurate and realistic assessment of their work. They have successfully improved provision to develop children's early reading and writing skills and, as a result, children freely engage in mark making. Improvements have been made to the organisation of the indoor environment to provide a range of learning spaces in which staff have introduced a broad range of stimulating activities and resources. However, on occasions, children run around boisterously outdoors, disturbing others; this is because the outdoor activities do not fully engage them in purposeful learning and development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers, who responded to the inspection questionnaire, are satisfied with their child's education. While few made written comments, those that did expressed their concerns about specific areas of the school's work. The majority said their children were happy in school and the school took good care of them. Parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities were appreciative of the support provided. The inspectors agree with these positive views. A few parents and carers raised concerns about their children's progress and said that they did not have enough information about how well their child was doing. A proportion of parents and carers were of the opinion that the school does not take account of their opinions and suggestions. Governors are fully aware of these feelings and are intent on improving links with parents and carers. A minority of parents and carers expressed their concerns with the leadership and management of the school. Inspectors looked closely at this area and found that this has improved since the last inspection and that leaders now have a satisfactory capacity to make further improvements.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stoke Damerel Primary 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 306 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	41	35	53	3	5	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	32	48	33	50	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	27	37	56	10	15	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	30	34	52	7	11	5	8
The teaching is good at this school	16	24	40	61	10	15	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	24	39	59	9	14	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	24	49	74	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)	7	11	42	64	10	15	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	29	3	50	14	21	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	30	31	47	10	15	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	26	35	53	12	18	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	14	21	29	44	16	24	6	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	42	25	38	11	17	1	2

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



11 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stoke Damerel Primary School, Plymouth PL1 5PA

Thank you for sparing the time to talk to us and for sharing your thoughts about your school with us. We are pleased with the progress that your school has made since the last inspection. We noticed that you pay attention in lessons, especially when teachers ask you to beat the clock or give you chances to talk with a partner about your work and ideas. You enjoy lessons where you can take part in investigations and experiments and this is helping to improve your skills and understanding in science. The teaching across the school has improved and is satisfactory overall. As a result, you are learning more and making better progress. You can help the school by trying to do your best in each lesson. Your teachers are taking notice of the progress you are making in lessons. They often check that you understand what you are doing and change their plans when you are finding the work too hard or too easy. Sometimes they don't make it clear what they expect you to learn, so we have asked them to explain to you exactly what they want you to learn in each lesson. We have asked the headteacher and senior staff to continue to visit lessons and look at your work to keep a close eye on how well you are doing.

Your behaviour in lessons and around school helps to keep the school running smoothly. You work well in small groups and listen carefully to each other. Many of you told us that lunchtime behaviour is improving because of the play equipment but that it is still not as good as at other times of the day. Children in the Reception class have been given more things to do and play with in their classrooms. We have asked the school to make sure that there are more things for children to play and learn with in the outdoor area of the Reception class.

Your school and governors have had a lot of useful advice and support from other adults over the last few terms. All of these people have planned carefully and worked well together to improve your school. We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to make another plan that will make the school an even better place to come to. Keep up the hard work.

Yours sincerely

Mark Lindfield

Her Majesty's Inspector

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