

# Stalbridge Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113899
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	338265
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 January 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anna Sketchley

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	193
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Helen Hedditch
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Allen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Stalbridge Dorset DT10 2LP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent 40 per cent of their time visiting lessons and observed 10 teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and spoke informally to parents. They observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books and the systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress, plans for improvement, notes of visits from the local authority and 55 questionnaires returned by parents and carers. They also looked at questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

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

- the ability of leaders at all levels to improve attainment and progress in English and mathematics, especially for boys and more able pupils in English
- how well provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities supports their attainment and progress so that they achieve as well as they can
- the progress of new strategies in teaching, learning and the curriculum in English and mathematics to improve the attainment and progress of all pupils and arrest underachievement
- how well children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve.

## Information about the school

Stalbridge C of E is an average-sized primary school with seven single-age classes. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, the majority of these having moderate learning difficulties. All pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The school provides a breakfast club. Recent awards are Healthy Schools status, Activemark and Eco Bronze 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?**

**3**

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

**2**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Due to previous weaknesses in teaching, a dip occurred in attainment and progress in 2008 and 2009. These weaknesses have been resolved and teaching is now good throughout the school. As a result of accurate self-evaluation, appropriate whole-school strategies to address underachievement were identified and implemented. During the inspection lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and analysis of the school's rigorous tracking of pupils' progress demonstrate that the rate of pupils' progress has accelerated significantly following the introduction of these strategies. Strong leadership and supportive governors who challenge the school to do its best are ensuring that it has a good capacity for sustaining recent improvements.

Although there is still work to do to embed new procedures, boys in particular and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are doing much better than was formerly the case, especially in mathematics and writing. Standards of writing in Years 5 and 6 are higher than previously. Although subject leaders are willing to share in new developments and are very knowledgeable about the subjects they lead, some do not have all the skills required to be fully effective in monitoring improvement and do not have sufficient time to do so. In addition, a permanent literacy leader has yet to be appointed.

The improved quality of teaching has some outstanding features. Newly introduced strategies to enhance pupils' learning, especially in English and mathematics, are particularly effective and have been a significant reason for the recent more rapid progress in these subjects. These new strategies are not yet consistently used to their fullest effect. The new curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills across different subjects, but again these are not yet being fully utilised. The Early Years Foundation Stage is a strength of the school and children make good progress.

Pupils enjoy school, shown for example by the very good take-up of extra activities. Their good and sometimes exemplary behaviour, positive attitude in lessons and excellent relationships with adults are of great assistance in helping them to make the accelerated progress that is now evident.

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

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
  - ensuring the full and consistent use of the new strategies that have been introduced in teaching and the curriculum.

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- Empower and improve the skills of subject leaders so that they are able to take more responsibility for subject development by:
  - appointing a permanent leader for literacy
  - ensuring leaders receive appropriate professional development
  - allocating time for monitoring areas of responsibility.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Infant classes build well on the good start that children receive in Reception and by the end of Year 2, attainment is significantly above average. Boys are immediately engaged in both mathematics and writing because of the stimulating way in which lessons are presented. Year 1 boys demonstrate a very good knowledge of both 2D and 3D shapes, identifying the difference between them and being able to name such shapes as a triangular prism. This year, a significant number of boys in Year 2 are on track to achieve the higher level in mathematics.

Average standards by the end of Year 6 are due to previous underachievement. Achievement is satisfactory but progress is now more rapid and consequently enjoyment of learning is stronger. Years 5 and 6 are on course to meet the challenging targets the school has set. More opportunities for pupils to practise basic skills, improvements to teaching, booster classes and one-to-one help for identified pupils are showing clear signs of success. Year 6 use their literacy skills to good effect to produce excellent individual projects they have chosen from within a designated area of study such as the Jurassic coast or famous French battles. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with moderate learning difficulties, are making the same good progress as all other pupils.

The excellent relationship between pupils and adults contributes well to pupils' growing sense of enjoyment and good personal development, and creates a positive climate for learning and playing together. Pupils say that 'every teacher knows every child' and are confident that if they have a problem, an adult will help to sort it out. They say they feel safe in school and that 'the teachers look after you' and they understand clearly the need to keep safe. They make a good contribution to the school and local community and enjoy the many opportunities created for them to take responsibility and learn skills for the future, especially by looking after younger pupils, serving on the school council and taking part in recycling duties. Relationships between pupils are good and they show a good awareness of each other's needs. As well as being able to discuss healthy issues, they demonstrate their commitment to the ideal through their healthy lunch boxes and very high take-up of sports activities. They particularly enjoy daily 'Wake and Shake' exercises.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<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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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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	3
<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>1</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>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Planning for learning is thorough and consistent throughout the school. At the beginning of every lesson, teachers ensure pupils understand what they are to learn and interactive whiteboards effectively capture pupils' attention. Interesting resources and teachers' good subject knowledge ensure that pupils are motivated to learn. Work is differentiated correctly and meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These latter pupils are very well supported by well prepared and highly trained teaching assistants within the classroom. Just occasionally, the level of challenge for more able pupils is insufficient so they do not make the quick progress of which they are capable. Marking, especially in literacy, is exemplary and clearly explains how pupils can improve their work. Pupils know their individual targets for literacy and numeracy but teachers sometimes miss the opportunity to remind pupils to refer to them whilst they are completing tasks. New strategies to enhance learning are proving to be particularly effective but are not yet used to their fullest extent.

A new curriculum is supporting the learning of basic skills well by developing links across subjects but its full impact is not yet evident. The computer suite offers pupils good opportunities to practise their information and communication technology skills on a regular basis but there are not enough resources in the classrooms to enable these skills to be used effectively across the curriculum. The school offers good opportunities for learning a modern foreign language and pupils experience French throughout the junior years. The outdoor learning area with its hide and pond is exceptional and is strengthening the teaching of science and making an important contribution to pupils' spiritual development. A wide range of clubs, visits and visitors provide good enrichment

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and effectively support pupils' social development.

Pupils are well known by all staff and well cared for on a daily basis. Provision for pupils with special needs and/or disabilities is well organised and recent changes to its organisation and procedures are having a successful impact upon pupils' progress. Hearing impaired pupils are particularly well provided for and included. The Oasis club that runs at lunchtime for pupils who might otherwise find it difficult to make relationships with other pupils, is highly successful.

*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?**

The headteacher, leadership team and governors are determined to drive forward improvement and their work has been very effective in addressing identified weaknesses and securing improvement. The school's self-evaluation, priorities and action plans are accurate and a secure basis for sustaining this improvement. Although the whole staff team are working well together and are successfully improving literacy, there is no permanent post holder to coordinate this area. Some subject leaders do not yet have all the skills required to inform them about standards to enable them to play a full role in monitoring. These weaknesses are being addressed.

There are effective partnerships with outside agencies, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and good links with other schools. Promoting equality and tackling discrimination of different groups of pupils is well managed and effective, with improvements evident in outcomes for different groups. Effective safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements, and ensure that pupils are safe and secure in school. In all of these areas, pupils' well-being and learning are effectively supported. The school has carried out an audit of community cohesion which shows that although local links are good, and the school itself is a cohesive community, its effectiveness in promoting community cohesion within a global context is more limited.

*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>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join school with the skills expected, except in communication, language and literacy, where skills are below expectations. They make good progress in all areas of learning because of good provision and by the end of Reception, almost all reach at least average standards. A calm atmosphere and warm relationships support the emphasis on children's personal and social development, so that they behave well and quickly become confident learners. Adults have a good knowledge of children's learning and welfare needs. Activities are stimulating and children make a valuable contribution to planning their learning that includes their own ideas and interests. Recently they have suggested having an Estate Agent shop for their role play corner to fit in with the study of their village. There is exactly the right balance between activities chosen by adults for group learning and those chosen by the children during 'Let's Explore' times. Progress is carefully assessed and used to plan the next steps in their learning. A valuable record is kept in each child's 'Learning Journey' book and parents are invited to contribute to this. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage and welfare arrangements are good.

The outdoor learning area is quite small and activities are sometimes curtailed because there is no cover during inclement weather.

### *These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2



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## **Views of parents and carers**

The school engages effectively with parents and a very large majority are supportive of the school although a very small minority had some concerns, including feeling that communication could be improved at senior leadership level. It was intimated by a few that this had already begun to improve. A very small minority of parent questionnaires commented on a safety issue concerning gates into the playground and doors into the building that are not always locked during school hours. This issue has been brought to the attention of the governing body. Inspectors interviewed some parents personally and those spoken to were happy with the school's arrangements. Results of the inspection questionnaire correspond closely with those of a questionnaire sent out by the school at the end of the autumn term.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stalbridge 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 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 193 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	49	24	44	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	44	27	49	4	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	31	31	56	5	9	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	38	27	49	3	5	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	45	27	49	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	45	26	47	2	4	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	44	24	44	5	9	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	38	25	45	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	35	31	56	1	2	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	44	22	40	5	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	40	25	45	3	5	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	20	36	23	42	8	15	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	53	20	36	2	4	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.**



21 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stalbridge Church of England Primary School, Stalbridge DT10 2LP

On behalf of the team of inspectors that visited your school recently, I should like to thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave us and for spending time talking to us, especially at lunchtime. We really enjoyed meeting you.

Stalbridge is a satisfactory school but you are beginning to make faster progress in your learning because of the actions taken by your headteacher along with all the adults in your school. These are some of the best things we found.

- You enjoy coming to school and attend regularly.
  - You know how to stay safe and are very good at keeping healthy, enjoying 'Wake and Shake' and all the extra sports activities that the school provides.
  - Your teachers make learning interesting for you and your attitude to learning is good.
  - You behave well around the school and get on really well together.
  - You are well cared for and you told us that you feel happy and safe in school.
- All the adults in your school want you to achieve well and do your very best. They know what needs to be done next and, from our findings, we have asked them to do some things to make your learning even better.
- We have asked them to make sure you reach the highest standards you are capable of in English and mathematics.
  - We would like your teachers to be able to help your headteacher to check how well all the different subjects are taught and for one teacher to have special responsibility for looking after literacy.

Please keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Anna Sketchley

Lead inspector

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