

Stanley (Crook) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114059
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	338287
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Lesley Clark

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	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Trevor Carroll
Headteacher	Mrs Shirley Oswald
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited five lessons or parts of lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and several groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, the school's tracking information, safeguarding policies and procedures, and questionnaires returned by staff, pupils, and parents and carers.

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

- how the school develops pupils' communication, language, speaking and listening skills
- personalised learning programmes for pupils and to what extent pupils use their initiative both in their learning and personally
- the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about the school

This small rural school serves the local villages, a small town and Traveller communities. Most pupils are White British. The number of pupils who enter or leave during the school year is greater than is usual. Forty per cent of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is much higher than average as is the number with a statement of special educational needs. One third of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national norm. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of Reception children who share the class with Year 1 pupils. The school holds several awards, including the Healthy Schools, Activemark, Investing in Children and Anti-bullying 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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In this school pupils and their needs come first. Right from the start, staff concentrate on developing pupils' speaking, listening and communication skills because most pupils have very poor speech and limited language when they begin school. Pupils make outstanding progress in speech and language development. By the end of Year 6 pupils are articulate and confident speakers. They are good at asking questions and listening to each other, so conversations flow. Pupils have ample opportunities to use their initiative. They decide their own rules, rewards and sanctions. 'Try our best, tell the truth, look after each other and the community' is pupils' personal code of conduct. This is why their behaviour and contribution to the community are outstanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. This is because of excellent assessment systems and an outstanding curriculum which is tailored to individual needs and involves pupils in helping to shape their education. The school takes exceptionally good care of all its pupils. Consequently, pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Outstanding partnerships with parents and carers and outside agencies help to ensure that all pupils achieve success.

Pupils make good progress to reach broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. This is because they are well taught in every class. Pupils' writing is improving steadily but it is not as good as their reading. The school encourages pupils to read all the time but has not yet found similar ways for pupils to share and celebrate good writing. Good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to make good progress in their learning and development. The outdoor activities are not always thought provoking or challenging and this limits children's opportunities to think, solve problems and work things out for themselves.

The school knows itself well. It meets its challenging targets. Since the last inspection the school has sharpened up provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, improved pupils' writing skills and further developed links with the community, and parents and carers. It demonstrates its good capacity to continue to improve. The school gives excellent value for money. It promotes equality and tackles discrimination extremely successfully.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise standards in writing by finding ways to celebrate and share writing so pupils learn from each other.
- Ensure that outdoor activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage challenge

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children to think, solve problems and work things out for themselves.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils are very keen to learn. They agree that, 'We have lots of fun!' They check their work carefully and measure their progress against the targets they have helped to set. Lessons are a real two-way process with teachers and pupils both asking and answering questions because adults encourage pupils to talk and to use new words. Standards are generally below average at the end of Year 2 because few pupils reach the higher levels at that stage. By the end of Year 6 standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science, with over one quarter of pupils exceeding expected levels. More-able pupils do well because the work challenges them. Pupils are proud of their achievements and explain, for example, how they carry out scientific investigations and use mathematical graphs to help them record their findings. They enjoy reading to each other and with pupils of different ages but have less opportunity to share writing experiences in this way or to 'publish' their writing. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make exceptional progress because their needs are identified swiftly and so they get specialist help quickly. Their performance is much better than that of similar groups of pupils nationally.

Adults seek and value pupils' opinions because they know they will get an honest response. For example, when the headteacher asked if the celebrations assembly was all right, pupils very politely told her that it had gone on a bit too long. The school council makes real decisions about matters that affect them such as deciding to have laptops in the computer suite so they could be used in classrooms too. Pupils have a very clear understanding of right and wrong. They show great care and consideration for one another saying, 'Every child in this school deserves respect.' Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying. Racism is not an issue. As pupils explained, 'No-one is different; we all have one heart beating.' Pupils have a good awareness of different cultures through the school's extensive partnerships such as those with a school in Gambia or with Durham Cathedral. Pupils are strong advocates of healthy living and enjoy taking part in vigorous sports, including swimming. A range of after-school clubs ranging from computing to sports and healthy cooking are available at varying times during the academic year for all pupils. Pupils eat healthily and explained that the only litter they found around school was orange peel. Their good reading and computer skills, together with their social poise and confidence, prepare them well for their future lives. Most pupils attend well and the school is making strenuous efforts to improve the attendance of the very small number of pupils who do not.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching quality is very consistent. Strengths include the use of interactive technology both by teachers and pupils and highly effective strategies to develop pupils' speech and language. Teaching assistants are used exceptionally well to ensure that pupils' individual needs are fully catered for. Sometimes, teachers miss opportunities for pupils to work together so they can learn actively and with greater independence. Assessment procedures are first rate. Teachers check pupils' progress regularly so as to identify who needs extra help. This is why no time is lost in providing support, a key factor in the excellent progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils evaluate how well they have understood new work and so teachers know what to do in the next lesson to ensure that pupils build on what they know. Teachers make time to discuss pupils' work with them. Marking clearly shows pupils what they have done well and what they need to improve.

The curriculum is enlivened by an extensive range of excellent quality extra-curricular activities, educational visits and visitors to school. Subjects are linked creatively together so pupils use their reading, numeracy and computer skills in many different contexts. Their developing speech and language skills are enhanced by learning a modern foreign language and lots of singing opportunities. Both of these help pupils to articulate words clearly. In addition, the curriculum offers pupils personalised learning programmes to cater for their individual needs, such as the special music and movement class for pupils with physical difficulties.

The school takes excellent care of all its pupils and provides exceptionally well for their personal, social and emotional health. The care given to individual pupils and their

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families facing challenging circumstances is exemplary and makes a major contribution to these pupils' progress. Family learning activities such as cooking workshops for parents and carers and children as well as weekly 'drop in' clinics are very successful, with pupils as well as adults choosing to come along for a chat. Transition arrangements between different year groups and schools are outstanding.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
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?

Members of the senior leadership team consistently communicate high expectations to staff so as to ensure continued good improvement. Their informal approach to checking teaching quality and pupils' learning is effective because all staff work successfully as a team and share the same goals. The school's future plans are firmly based on rigorous evaluation of what needs improving as well as building on areas of strength. For example, introducing the 'Big Write' a year ago is beginning to pay dividends in terms of improving writing standards. The school engages most effectively with nearby communities and has good links with a range of community groups beyond these. Community cohesion, however, forms a minor part of the school's development planning. Excellent partnerships with parents and carers mean that they are closely involved with their children's progress and development. They know exactly what to do to help their children because the school gives them lots of practical suggestions. Partnerships with external agencies and educational providers make an excellent contribution to pupils' well-being and successfully widen pupils' educational experience. Governors are very supportive. They know the school well. They are rigorous in ensuring that pupils and staff are safe. The school adopts recommended good practice across all areas of its work. Training of all staff, particularly in child protection, is of good quality and safeguarding procedures are robust.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

From well below expected starting points, especially in communication, speech and language, children make good progress to reach below expected levels at the start of Year 1. They achieve well because they are well taught and the setting is well managed. The majority of children have speech-related problems when they start school and some have little or no language. They make rapid progress in this aspect of their learning because staff talk to them all the time and help them to learn and use lots of new words. Recently the staff introduced 'Big it up Friday' when children tell the biggest and best story they possibly can, helped by lots of practice at home because parents and carers are closely involved too. This is proving to be very effective. Activities indoors are bright and stimulating and children have lots of free choice. They readily help themselves to fruit and milk when they want to. Outside is less stimulating. Although there are many things for children to do there is little to enthuse budding engineers or builders such as channelling water or building large-scale structures because activities do not require children to think and work things out for themselves. Adults use information from assessments well to check what children know and to plan the next steps in their learning. As a result, children are happy and settled, eager to learn and achieve well.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers think this is an excellent school and

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that their children are very happy and making good progress. The inspectors agree with their positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stanley (Crook) 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 inspector received 18 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 79 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	79	4	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	15	79	4	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	63	6	32	1	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	74	5	26	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	14	74	5	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	58	7	37	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	68	6	32	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)	13	68	6	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	68	6	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	63	6	32	1	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	68	5	26	1	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	68	6	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	74	5	26	0	0	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.



10 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stanley (Crook) Primary School, Crook, DL15 9AN

Thank you for your warm and friendly welcome. I should like to say a special thank you to the school councillors who showed me round and answered my colleague's questions and to thank the group of pupils in Years 5 and 6 who talked to me about their work as well as all of you who chatted to me in lessons and over lunch.

You go to an outstanding school. You are quite right, it is a lot of fun at Stanley Crook and you also work hard. You behave extremely well and have an excellent awareness of health and safety. You certainly live up to your code of conduct and I could see everywhere that pupils try their best, tell the truth and look after each other and the community. You make good progress because you are well taught. Those of you who find learning difficult make outstanding progress because you get lots of extra help very quickly. Your school takes great care to make sure that you have lots of excellent quality clubs and extra activities as well as interesting visits and visitors to school so as to give you the best and broadest possible education. The adults in your school take extremely good care of you all.

I have asked your school to do two things to make it even better. I think you could write as well as you read if you had more opportunities to share your writing like you do with your reading partners. Your school should also celebrate some of the best writing so as to give you something to aim for. Second, I noticed that Reception children had more interesting activities to do inside than outdoors. I have asked your school to provide more activities outside that make children think and work things out for themselves.

I really enjoyed your Christmas plays and think your school teaches you to speak extremely well. Your singing and acting were also very good indeed. I hope you enjoy becoming equally good writers!

Yours faithfully

Mrs Lesley Clark

Lead inspector

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