

# St Stephen's (Tonbridge) Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118578
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	339250
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Eileen Chadwick

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	194
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nikki Cadell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sandra D'Warte
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Royal Rise Tonbridge Kent TN9 2DQ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Two thirds of the inspection time was spent looking at learning and 13 lessons were observed with eight teachers seen. Inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff with key responsibilities, the chair of governors and a local authority officer. In addition to observing the school's work and evaluating documentation such as policies and records of pupils' learning and progress, they examined 40 completed questionnaires from parents.

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

- children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage and standards at the end of Reception
- evidence of pupils' current attainment in Key Stages 1 and 2 and learning and progress for all groups of pupils, especially in literacy in Key Stage 1 and in mathematics for boys in Key Stage 2
- the extent to which teaching and the curriculum meet the needs of pupils
- the extent to which new leadership structures and systems are developing and the involvement of staff in monitoring and improving the work of the school.

## Information about the school

This school, average in size, serves a mixed area close to the town centre. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, although the number with statements of special educational needs is below. These pupils' difficulties are mainly speech, literacy, numeracy, emotional and behavioural.

Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils attending the school has fallen so that it is now a one-form entry. This has led to staff redundancies. Further disruption occurred when the school was without a permanent headteacher for the whole of the last year. The headteacher was appointed September 2009. The school is part of a local authority intensive support programme.

The school provides breakfast and after-school clubs for pupils from Reception to Year 6.

**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

This is a satisfactory and improving school. The school is recovering well from an unsettled period. The headteacher, in a very short period of time, has provided a clear direction. Together with staff and governors, she has taken a hard look at the school's performance. They have made accurate judgements that while attainment in English and mathematics is improving for pupils in Key Stage 2, it is still too low in English at the end of Key Stage 1. A major cause has been the weak attainment in literacy at the end of Reception, with steps now being taken to improve the teaching of sounds and letters (phonics) through Reception and Key Stage 1. The headteacher is raising expectations of what pupils can achieve and the new systems for improving pupils' behaviour are also having a positive impact. The school is caring and calm and pays very close attention to keeping pupils safe and, as a result, they feel secure and well cared for.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children begin school with skills which are well below those expected for their age. Progress is satisfactory in Reception and Key Stage 1 but attainment remains low in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. Children are now making good progress in developing their understanding of sounds and letters in Reception, but this has yet to impact on attainment further up the school. Attainment in mathematics is average and has improved over the past few years.

Pupils make good progress between Years 3 and 6 and this leads to average attainment in English, mathematics and science for Year 6 pupils. Actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics are having a good impact on raising attainment throughout the school. However, pupils' investigative skills in science are underdeveloped and pupils do not apply mathematics as well as they should. Pupils' attainment in writing is not as good as in reading, with spelling a weaker aspect for pupils of all abilities.

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and mainly good in Key Stage 2. Teachers are enthusiastic and manage their pupils well but, in Key Stage 1, there is not always enough direct teaching of basic literacy skills. During group writing, links with reading are not always strong enough and do not build sufficiently on pupils' reading and phonic skills. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and, when teaching captures their interest, it is good. However, when lesson introductions are too long, they do not take an active enough part, or when the pace of the lesson slackens, pupils' attention wanders. The satisfactory curriculum gives pupils good opportunities for taking part in after-school activities. Breakfast and after-school clubs support working parents well and give pupils a caring, purposeful and happy start and end to the school day. Systems for teaching reading are being strengthened, but the school rightly acknowledges that systems for

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hearing pupils read vary from class to class. They are insufficiently rigorous to accelerate pupils' progress in Reception and Key Stage 1.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has tackled some of the outstanding issues with urgency and rigour. For example, structures and systems are being overhauled to ensure the school is properly managed. Staff's roles and responsibilities are being reviewed, although those of some senior leaders' roles are not yet fully clear and this hinders shared endeavour for improving the school. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment in mathematics has improved throughout the school and the headteacher is strengthening self-evaluation procedures. Swift action is being taken to develop middle managers' roles so they can play a fuller part in raising achievement, especially through checking pupils' assessments and observing teaching.

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

- Raise standards in reading and writing in Reception and Key Stage 1 by:
  - increasing the direct teaching of basic skills during literacy lessons
  - ensuring, during group writing, that closer links are forged with reading and tasks draw upon these skills
  - strengthening systems for hearing pupils read.
- In Key Stage 2, improve pupils' spelling, their scientific investigative skills and ability to apply mathematics to science.
- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better by:
  - ensuring lesson introductions are not overlong and pupils take a more active part in their learning
  - ensuring the pace of lessons is quickened so pupils' interest and enjoyment are fully sustained throughout.
- Developing stronger systems for shared leadership and management by:
  - clarifying the roles of some senior leaders so responsibilities and endeavours are shared more evenly
  - developing the roles of middle managers so they play a full part in raising pupils' achievement.

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

**3**

Effective routines ensure pupils settle quickly and are ready to learn. In the lessons seen, pupils were observed to be making satisfactory progress. Lessons engage pupils most when they are relevant to their daily lives and they can learn through solving problems as well as listening and watching. In a good mathematics lesson in Year 3 when pupils solved money problems, their interest was fully gained because of the 'Toy' theme. The teacher's successful balance of instructing and providing opportunities for pupils to solve problems for themselves enabled all pupils to play an active role and to

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apply the skills they had learned. However, there is not yet enough of this good quality learning in the school as a whole.

Improvements to teaching mathematics are ensuring both girls and boys achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily overall, but make good progress in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 2, a great deal of attention is paid to redressing the low attainment in literacy on entry to Year 3. Pupils' needs are carefully identified and they are given good support. However, in Key Stage 1, writing tasks do not always link well enough to pupils' attainment in reading and phonics, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are helped well and incidents of poor behaviour are unusual. Pupils' attendance is average and strengthened procedures have reduced the number of persistent absentees.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They take a pride in wearing their school uniform, move around the school calmly and are considerate towards others, reflecting their good moral and social development. They make a valuable contribution to the school community through their school council work and their support for younger pupils at lunch and break times as 'Playground Buddies'. Their work outside the school community is not as developed and this, together with their understanding of different cultures, is an aspect the school is strengthening. Pupils' understanding and take up of healthy lifestyles is satisfactory. The extent to which they apply their basic skills and regularly attend school prepares them satisfactorily for the future.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>

<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>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>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is variable across the school and more effective for the older pupils than in Reception and Key Stage 1. Consistently good relationships between adults and pupils, and teachers' enthusiasm and good management of pupils, are strengths. Plans often show clearly what pupils of different abilities are expected to learn and teachers make sure they are clear about this. However, not all teachers make the best use of learning time when they spend too long on instructions and do not give pupils enough opportunities to play an active enough part in their learning. In Key Stage 1, there is not always enough direct teaching of basic skills or links between reading and writing. In these cases, teachers do not make the best use of their assessments of pupils' reading skills when planning writing tasks. Individual target setting, recently introduced, is now beginning to help pupils to play a more active part in improving their attainment.

The curriculum is strongly focused on English and mathematics and is currently being broadened to include a modern foreign language. Recent improvements have focused on improving provision in Reception so that children have proper access to outdoor play and adapting the environment so there is a better balance of focused teaching and learning through play. The school has rightly identified that not enough attention is given to developing pupils' scientific investigative skills, including the application of mathematics to science. Sound partnerships with other schools enhance pupils' educational experiences and their social development. Good pastoral care, close links with outside agencies for supporting vulnerable pupils, and the support for families through the family liaison officer play an important part in helping pupils to adjust to school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

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The headteacher has communicated her vision clearly and is empowering leaders at all levels. School leaders, staff and governors share a desire to raise pupils' attainment. The headteacher is creating secure systems for them to work together in evaluating the work of the school through more rigorous evaluation of assessment data and systematic monitoring of teaching. However, there is work to do to ensure management responsibilities are equally divided by clarifying the roles of senior leaders and the part they play in improving pupils' achievement across the whole school. Although there has been much collection of data in the past, there has been insufficient analysis of how well different groups are performing and how well provision meets their needs. Support provided by the local authority for improving attainment has been welcomed and well managed by the school. This has led to, for example, improvements in the teaching of mathematics and better standards. Governors have recently reorganised and, under the well-informed leadership of the chair, they are increasingly playing a stronger role in challenging the school and holding it to account for its performance.

The school is active and effective in tackling discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. There are good procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils. School leaders ensure that staff receive effective guidance to enable them to identify issues that would raise concerns about pupils' well-being. Community cohesion is satisfactory; the school actively promotes cohesion in its own community and has evaluated that further work is needed to reach out beyond this. It is in the process of appropriately extending its global provision.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</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>3</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**



**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**  
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Standards of care and safety are good and this helps children feel secure and happy. Children arrive with a wide range of skills but, overall, their attainment on entry is well below that typical for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their personal development. Staff have established routines and children quickly get to know these. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and, as a result, children make satisfactory progress. Children's attainment at the end of Reception is below average, and particularly low in reading, phonics and writing. The school has recently stepped up the teaching of phonics. Grouping arrangements for this are having a good impact on helping staff to match work to the learning needs of all children. There is a suitable balance of children learning for themselves and the direct teaching of basic skills by adults. There is good emphasis on developing the children's speaking skills. Outdoor play, although much improved recently, is still developing to reflect the different areas of learning more fully. Assessment is regular and analysed thoroughly to check the impact of provision on children's learning. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The accommodation and outdoor area are being improved and a new unit is being built very shortly. Children from Reception who attend the breakfast and after-school clubs are well cared for and have worthwhile activities to enjoy.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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**

Most parents have positive views about the school and are pleased with the strong sense of community and how this is continuing under the leadership of the new headteacher. Several parents expressed concern about some pupils' behaviour. The inspection team find that this is improving although a minority do not always concentrate as well as they should.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Stephen's (Tonbridge) 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 inspector received 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 194 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	40	23	58	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	50	20	50	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	8	20	26	65	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	33	20	50	0	0	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	12	30	23	58	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	23	25	63	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	18	28	70	2	5	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	18	26	65	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	25	22	55	1	3	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	20	17	43	9	23	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	15	22	55	6	15	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	25	26	65	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	45	15	38	3	8	1	3

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.**



9 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Stephen's (Tonbridge) Primary School, Tonbridge TN9 2DQ

You will remember that a team of inspectors visited your school recently to find out how well the school is doing. We thoroughly enjoyed talking with a number of you in lessons, looking at some of your work and meeting members of your school council. Thank you for making us welcome.

Firstly, you need to know your school gives you a satisfactory education and the headteacher, school staff and governors are working hard to make this better. Here are some good things about your school:

- You make good progress in Key Stage 2 and, by the time you leave, you reach the levels expected for your age in English and mathematics.
- You help to make your school a happy place because you are polite and take pride in wearing your school uniform.
- You are helpful to others and you show this by your 'Playground Buddies' work with younger pupils.
- You have some good opportunities for after-school clubs.
- The school looks after you well and you feel very safe in school.

This is what we are asking your school to do to improve:

- help those of you in Reception and Key Stage 1 to improve your reading and writing skills
- help those of you in Key Stage 2 to improve your spelling, scientific investigation skills, and the way you use mathematics in science
- make sure lesson introductions do not go on too long and that you have enough time to work at your activities
- make sure all school leaders contribute equally to making the school better and checking how well things are going.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school and continue to work hard in all you do.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector

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