

Studfall Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121809
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340015
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	448
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rena Glithero
Headteacher	Kim Kirchin and Mrs Louise McGeachie
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons and observed teachers and teaching assistants working with pupils. Inspectors held meetings with the two headteachers, governors and staff, talked to parents and pupils, and looked at school planning and assessment data. They examined the school's documentation including minutes of governors' meetings, improvement planning and that relating to safeguarding and pupils' welfare. The inspection team scrutinised 243 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 53 from staff and 102 from pupils.

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

- ? pupils' attainment in English and mathematics, particularly for the more able
- ? the use of assessment information in ensuring the needs of all pupils, including those with statements of special educational needs, are met
- ? how effectively governors and subject leaders are checking on the quality of provision and outcomes
- ? how well pupils are prepared for life in multicultural Britain.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than average. A few pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups. A third of all pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities which is significantly higher than usual. There is designated special provision for 33 pupils with statements of special educational needs and, together with those in school, they account for 10 per cent of pupils. This is exceptionally high compared to other schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. A breakfast club is organised by the school each morning for approximately 30 pupils. Two headteachers lead and manage the school.

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

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It is outstanding because it is led and managed by not one but two excellent headteachers. They complement one another exceptionally well to the benefit of the school and pupils. Staff, parents, carers and pupils say they appreciate the support and inspiration they provide. 'Valuing all' is the school motto and staff feel this applies to them as well as the pupils. They, in turn, value the uniqueness of every pupil and work as one to ensure individual learning needs, however complex, are met. Team spirit is high and, together, staff are conscientiously and successfully promoting learning for the large number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding.

A calm, purposeful atmosphere for learning is evident in lessons. This stems from the excellent relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils are unanimous in their praise for staff and the way they are looked after and supported in school. 'We've got a pretty amazing school' was a typical comment from pupils. Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around school with all pupils showing a mature consideration and concern for others. Good manners and exemplary politeness virtually guarantee that all feel safe and are able to enjoy school. Attendance is above the national average and clearly demonstrates pupils' enjoyment of school and their keenness to learn.

Attainment on entry to the current Year 3 is above average but it varies year on year. The entry level for the present Year 6 was below average. Overall, attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average. Staff expertise and the close support for learning provided by the favourable ratio of support staff to pupils ensures that most pupils make excellent progress from their starting points. This includes pupils with statements of special educational needs. Developing the curriculum to ensure it continues to meet pupils' needs is an on-going process. However, opportunities for pupils to use computers and other modern technology equipment such as cameras and computer-linked sensors or microscopes are limited because resources are unavailable in classrooms. Outstanding partnerships with parents, carers and outside agencies add most effectively to the care and guidance for all pupils.

The capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding because of the highly effective leadership and management and the impact this is having on the quality of provision and pupils' progress. Governors play a crucial role in setting challenging targets and in ensuring that school self-evaluation is accurate. Their collective knowledge and expertise is a key feature in the school's successful development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Increase the opportunities for pupils to use modern technology for independent research and to enhance their learning experiences by;
 - improving the level of resources available in the classroom
 - ensuring teachers make effective use of technological resources to support and extend learning in all subjects of the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils are keen to do well at school and this is evident from their excellent behaviour in lessons and the way they listen attentively to their teachers. They enjoy excellent relationships with the caring and supportive staff and this gives them the confidence to share ideas in lessons and to evaluate their own work. This helps them to understand how to make their work better. Pupils often work harmoniously in pairs or small groups. In most lessons, pupils can be seen to be making at least good progress and often excellent progress.

Attainment overall is above average in reading and mathematics and significantly above average in science. This performance includes all pupils. It is made more remarkable by the outstanding progress of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many other pupils including the few from minority ethnic backgrounds also make exceptional progress from their starting points. High standards in science have been maintained over two years. Attainment in writing is average and improving. The combined efforts of all staff and initiatives such as 'Big Write' are raising standards rapidly with 20% more pupils attaining expected levels this year over last year. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs are fully integrated with other pupils in class and all benefit from the wealth of expertise amongst staff and the highly effective teaching.

The friendliness of the school is a reflection of the excellent pastoral care, ensuring pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to live a healthy lifestyle. A pupil was heard at lunchtime comparing with another the sugar content in a fizzy drink and fruit juice, for example. Pupils' extremely positive attitudes are reflected in their above average attendance. All are prepared well for life in multicultural Britain as they study different world religions and participate enthusiastically in links with schools which are more diverse than their own.

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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
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	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Staff have worked conscientiously to ensure that their teaching is stimulating and appropriately matched to pupils' different learning needs. This applies even when all are taught in ability groups each day for English and mathematics. As a result, all pupils including those with statements of special educational needs are challenged and interested in their tasks. All concentrate well in lessons and invariably make at least good, often excellent, progress. Most teachers succeed in making lessons exciting and fun. Enjoyment was a key factor in nearly all lessons seen. Pupils who find learning challenging benefit from a friendly and supportive relationship with helpful adults. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and pupils rarely disappoint. Marking is thorough and informs pupils how to further improve their work. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own progress, adding to their understanding of how to do even better.

The generally exciting curriculum has a strong focus on active learning. Much is based on helping pupils to develop essential skills to equip them well for their future. Regular assessments identify who needs additional support and in what aspect of their learning. Strong links are being developed between subjects in order to promote basic literacy and numeracy skills more effectively. The 'Big Write' initiative, for example, is successfully raising standards in writing. Although most pupils have good computer skills, the shortage of resources in classrooms means that they have limited opportunities to use computers to support or enhance learning in the different subjects. A wide range of after-school clubs cater for all interests and abilities. These provide valuable skills for life for pupils.

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Staff are highly motivated and passionate about the care, support and guidance that they provide for pupils and families. The package of support available for the high number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is exemplary. All pupils are being taught a new sign each week to communicate with the hearing impaired pupils. It is easy to see why pupils feel safe, cared for, valued and respected. The breakfast club is growing in popularity. This provides pupils with healthy food, that they enjoy, as well as a wide range of learning activities that help to prepare them for the day. A special breakfast club for pupils with vulnerable circumstances has a particularly homely atmosphere giving these pupils confidence to deal with what the day brings. Some pupils receive excellent support from the three highly effective learning mentors. They provide valuable additional help for staff working with pupils with statements of special educational needs and the most vulnerable pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The two headteachers make a formidable team and prove that 'two heads can be better than one'. Both are single-mindedly determined to raise standards and are working very effectively together to make this happen. Discussions with staff and their responses to the questionnaire clearly demonstrate their enthusiasm and wholehearted commitment to school improvement. Every teacher during the inspection was keen to have a thorough evaluation of their lessons, seeking guidance on how to make it even better. Subject leaders have a strong sense of responsibility for developing their subjects and regularly monitor the quality of provision and outcomes. Their evaluations are shared and discussed with staff resulting in decisive new actions that are unanimously agreed and acted upon.

The governors are extremely well led and organised. Most visit regularly and are involved in setting ever more challenging targets and evaluating how well they are being met through monitoring. 'I am really proud of this school' is a governor's comment which typifies their involvement and determination to help staff bring about even further improvement.

Outstanding partnerships with parents and carers and a wide range of external agencies support the complex range of needs that the school has to address. These help to successfully promote pupils' learning and well-being and to provide excellent value for money. Studfall is an inclusive school, actively promoting equality of opportunity and

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tackling any discrimination or harassment rigorously. The leadership and management of the special educational needs provision is a significant task and the success of pupils reflects their outstanding effectiveness. At the time of the inspection safeguarding procedures were judged to be outstanding with the school exceeding national requirements exceptionally well. The work with pupils and families on internet safety, for example, is exemplary. Health and safety are rigorously managed and overseen.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Within the school community there are many good and outstanding elements. A detailed plan is helping the school to enhance and further develop its global links and those with the local community. This includes providing further opportunities for pupils to contribute to the community beyond school and build on the excellent contribution they make in school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Over half of the parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire and their responses were overwhelmingly positive. Almost all agreed, for example, that they were happy with their child's experiences at school. This reflects parents' appreciation of all that the school is trying to do for them and their children. Inspectors fully endorse parents' and carers' views. Inspection evidence shows that the school is outstanding and staff take swift action to address any negative comments raised by parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Studfall Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 243 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 448 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	123	51	109	45	8	3	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	149	61	91	37	1	0	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	105	43	125	51	6	2	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	111	46	122	50	6	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	125	51	113	47	1	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	106	44	124	51	7	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	99	41	135	56	7	3	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)	110	45	119	49	6	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	106	44	130	54	4	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	81	33	135	56	15	6	4	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	76	31	151	62	10	4	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	117	48	114	47	4	2	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	128	53	109	45	5	2	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

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 Studfall Junior School, Corby, NN17 2BT

Thank you for being so friendly, helpful, and good-mannered when we inspected your school.

Yours is an outstanding school. Many of you already know this as you told inspectors how amazing it is! One of best features is your excellent behaviour. Well done to all of you for being so sensible and caring towards others. Your good attendance shows how much you enjoy coming to school. All of you like your teachers and the excellent care, guidance and support that they provide make sure that you feel safe and cared for each day. Your parents also agree with you and they had lots of positive things to say about how the school involves them.

The inspectors were impressed with the excellent quality of teaching and learning. It ensures that you are constantly challenged and have to work hard in lessons. It is easy to see why most of you make outstanding progress. We know that all of you are trying your best to improve your writing this year and we can tell you that standards are rising. Well done again! We are asking staff to use computers much more to help you to learn. They make good use of their computer-linked white boards and the computer suite but there are not enough computer-related resources in most classes for you to use.

There is a lot you can be proud of about your school. It's fairly unique having two headteachers and with the support of hard-working governors and staff, they have helped to make school the exciting and interesting place it is for you. By the way, we think it is a great idea to learn sign language. Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr J Peacock

Lead inspector

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