

# South Stoke Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123039
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	340263
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Earish

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>	23
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Goss
<b>Headteacher</b>	Amanda Rogers
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	The Street South Stoke Reading RG8 0JS
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector, who saw six lessons taught by two teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work. The school's work was observed, as well as documentation including the school plan and information about pupils' progress. The inspector also talked to governors, pupils and staff in leadership positions. The views of eight school staff, 23 pupils and 24 parents and carers, expressed in their responses to questionnaires, were also taken into account.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at the following:

- the quality of teaching to see if it has been sufficiently strengthened to raise attainment and progress, especially in writing
- the impact of senior leaders on raising achievement through the monitoring of lessons and pupils' performance
- improvements to the curriculum to see if it is motivating and meaningful, especially for the youngest pupils
- the use of assessment and target setting to support learning and drive improvement.

## Information about the school

This is a very small village primary school and pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. Over half of the pupils are from outside the catchment area. Almost all are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities varies considerably from year to year and is well above that found nationally. Most have moderate learning difficulties. Although the school is situated in an advantaged area, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. In the last two years the school has achieved Healthy School Status and the Activemark for sport.

**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?**

**2**

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

**2**

## Main findings

South Stoke is a good school. Satisfactory at its last inspection, it has improved markedly in many areas of its work. This is acknowledged overwhelmingly by parents and carers, who are very supportive of the school. As one parent commented, 'This is a fantastic school ' there's a family atmosphere yet it takes education very seriously.' Pupils, too, speak effusively about the stimulating learning environment that enables them to flourish and do their very best. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As they move through the school pupils make good progress and their attainment is now above average by the time they leave. These improvements have been driven by the effective leadership of the headteacher, well supported by teachers and governors. Leaders have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and have acted effectively to tackle weaknesses. This has ensured the continuing improvement in pupils' attainment, achievement and enjoyment since the last inspection and confirms the school's good capacity to continue improving.

Outstanding levels of care and support lie at the heart of this school's success. Pupils say they feel extremely safe and there is always a trusted and respected adult they can go to with problems. This is because teachers know each child individually and understand their learning needs very well. As one pupil commented, 'We really get to know our teachers and you can share your worries with them. They always have time for you.' As a consequence, the teachers' detailed knowledge of each child's performance enables them to track and support their academic and personal progress accurately so they all achieve well. Teachers have high expectations of how much pupils can achieve, and work is well matched to their needs. However, there are missed opportunities to exploit pupils' abilities, especially those of higher attainers, to explore and test their own ideas by designing their own experiments in science, and so sustain their rapid progress.

The curriculum is arranged around themes which help pupils to see how the different parts of their learning fit together. For example, the topic of 'Light, Camera, Action' is providing pupils with opportunities for practical investigations using computers, books, video and scientific experiments. This is promoting some lively writing but there are still missed opportunities to fully exploit the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance and extend learning further.

Pupils enjoy school and all that it has to offer. The school's strong emphasis on promoting healthy lifestyles, recognised in its national awards, ensures that pupils have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Their attendance is above average. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community and are broadening their horizons through projects such as the links with a school in France. However,

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opportunities to increase their understanding of cultural diversity in contrasting locations within the United Kingdom are not yet as well developed.

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

- Ensure that teachers capitalise on opportunities during science for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to explore and test their own ideas by designing their own experiments in order to sustain their rapid progress.
- Build on the use of ICT to extend and support learning across the curriculum.
- Strengthen the links with other contrasting locations within the United Kingdom to deepen children's understanding of cultural diversity.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

It was impressive to observe, in all lessons, outstanding behaviour and pupils' willingness and ability at working either independently or with their classmates. This underpinned the positive climate for learning that was evident in all classes. Despite the considerable year-on-year fluctuation in the attainment of year groups, which is a common feature of very small schools, pupils achieve well and are inquisitive learners. All groups of pupils, including the most able and those most vulnerable, make good progress. Pupils in the current Year 6 are well on track to attain above-average standards this year. As one pupil said, 'I really enjoy school because as well as learning about English and mathematics we are encouraged to take responsibility for our own actions by becoming school councillors or contributing to the school magazine.' During an English lesson, an older group of pupils in the junior class explained how the teacher was encouraging them to assess for themselves how well they are learning by devising their own success criteria to judge the quality of their writing. They were unanimous that, 'This really helps you improve quickly and you feel much more responsible for your own work'.

Throughout the school, relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and contribute to the positive ethos for study. As a result, the atmosphere for learning created by the whole staff is supportive and caring. The pupils' enjoyment of learning is reflected in their above-average rates of attendance. They are proud of their school and take their responsibilities very seriously. Pupils' good basic skills, together with their positive attitudes for learning, mean that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

*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>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

'My daughter absolutely loves coming to school. She sees learning as an adventure and is excited about what every day has in store for her', was a view expressed by one parent and echoed by many. The school works in very close partnership with parents to meet the learning and welfare needs of every pupil. Consequently, all pupils, including those with a range of special needs, make good progress in relation to their needs. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to enhancing the quality of learning for all the pupils. Leaders have successfully improved provision, especially teaching and for writing.

Pupils understand what they must do and achieve by the end of each lesson because teachers share objectives and targets with them. This is part of the school ethos that encourages the pupils' involvement in their own learning. In addition, teachers' regular checks of pupils' understanding of previous learning provides good opportunities to clarify and consolidate new work. This ensures that pupils are not left behind. Planning is detailed and related to pupils' age and ability levels so that work is well matched to meet their individual needs within the mixed-age classes.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of additional opportunities in sport, art, music and ICT which develop their skills and interests as well as contributing to their health and well-being and enjoyment of their education. Pupils' books are regularly marked and provide them with helpful comments on how to improve their work. Target setting is guiding pupils' academic development well and is helping pupils gain an even clearer understanding of what they must do to improve. More opportunities are being provided for pupils to use ICT through the interesting topics and after-school clubs. However, more needs to be

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done for this initiative to be embedded securely.

*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>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The strong impact of leadership is seen in how effectively the headteacher and senior leaders are embedding ambition and driving improvement. They have, for example, successfully improved the quality of teaching and learning and taken effective actions to raise achievement since the last inspection. Leaders and governors take very seriously their responsibility to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination, and the success of this commitment is evident in the way barriers to learning have been effectively tackled. Consequently, pupils are now achieving their challenging targets.

Governors are knowledgeable and experienced and provide a good balance of support and challenge to school leaders. They ensure that the school's safeguarding procedures are outstanding and that all statutory requirements, including child protection and risk assessment, are regularly reviewed and approved.

The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. A plan and clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding from local, national and global perspectives. While links with contrasting communities within the United Kingdom are at an early stage of development, they illustrate the school's commitment in this area as well as exemplifying its good range of partnerships with others.

*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>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>1</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>2</b>

<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 safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the school their skills and understanding vary from well below the levels expected to fairly typical for their age. They quickly adapt to school routines and learn to play and work together very effectively within the mixed Reception and Year 1 Class. Children make good progress and achieve well because teaching is consistently good. Attainment is broadly average when they join Year 1 but can vary from below to above average. This is because cohorts are very small and so assessment data are often based on the performance of one or two children. They respond well to the challenges that are skilfully planned for them and thoroughly enjoy learning. For example, the children were happily filling containers with water when the teacher asked them if their containers were empty, nearly full or nearly empty. They could easily decide if they were empty or full but had great fun trying to decide how to describe a container partially filled with water.

Despite the small size of the outdoor learning area, it is provided with an interesting and varied range of equipment and resources to suit all abilities. Both the inside and outside are used well to develop children's skills and understanding in all areas of their learning. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Adults use assessment information well to track children's learning and to identify the next steps they need to move their learning on. There is a good balance between activities that are led by the adults and those that the children choose for themselves. Opportunities are, however, sometimes missed to increase children's independence by encouraging them to explore ideas on their own.

*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

## Views of parents and carers

The response rate to the questionnaire was very high. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school, its friendly atmosphere and the care given to



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pupils. All indicated that their children were happy at school and were kept safe. The inspector fully endorses these views. There were many written comments in praise of the school. A very small number of constructive criticisms were shared and discussed with the headteacher.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at South Stoke 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 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 23 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	88	3	13	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	92	2	8	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	79	4	17	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	75	5	21	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	79	4	17	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	71	6	25	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	63	9	38	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	54	7	29	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	71	6	25	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	58	10	42	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	75	5	21	0	0	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	19	79	4	17	0	0	1	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	79	2	8	1	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.**



7 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of South Stoke Primary School, Reading RG8 0JS

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons and talking to so many of you. I was pleased to hear that you like your school very much. Almost all your parents and carers are happy with the school too.

Yours is a good school, where staff and governors are working hard to make it even better. This means that there are lots of things that it does really well, but also that there are some things that could be even better.

I agree with the comments of your parents and carers when they say that you like school and that it is a welcoming, caring place where you feel safe. You get on well with each other and help the school to run smoothly.

I have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to test your own ideas in science by designing your own experiments so that you can make even faster progress. I have also asked them to give you even more opportunities to use ICT to make your learning more challenging. Your teachers are also going to build even more links with contrasting communities within the United Kingdom so that you can have first-hand knowledge of what it means to live in a multiracial community.

Each of you can play your part in making this school even better by continuing to work hard to meet the targets teachers set you.

Yours sincerely

John Earish

Lead inspector

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