

# Stoke Minster CofE Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132200
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stoke-On-Trent
<b>Inspection number</b>	342185
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Davinder Dosanjh HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	291
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Morgan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Lynne Willis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Booths Old Road Stoke-on-Trent Staffordshire ST4 4EE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01782 234800
<b>Fax number</b>	01782 236430
<b>Email address</b>	stokeminster@sgfl.org.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 November 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	342185

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2009

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and two representatives of the local authority. They observed the school's work, including its safeguarding arrangements, and looked at pupils' work, school policies and improvement planning. The results of the school's own recent survey of parents' and carers' views were analysed.

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

- pupils' attainment and progress since the January 2008 inspection
- the improvements in the science curriculum and the progress pupils make in science
- how well teaching and the use of assessment is challenging all pupils
- the effectiveness of leaders, managers and governors in addressing the issues raised at the previous inspection.

## Information about the school

This large primary school serves an inner-city area. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background and who speak English as an additional language is above average, although few are at a very early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very high, although a small number have a statement of special educational needs. At the time of the previous inspection in January 2008 the school was deemed to require special measures.

The school has been awarded International Schools status at intermediate level and has obtained the Eco-Schools award at bronze level.

**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

The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the concerns at the previous inspection and therefore, in accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Stoke Minster C of E Aided Primary School is now providing a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The headteacher, staff, governors and local authority have worked tirelessly to secure the improvements required. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children reach standards that are below average but are improving. However, standards have dropped in mathematics. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is now average. The standard of work seen in the school shows that the current Year 6 are well placed to match, and in some cases exceed, past performance levels, signifying the school's success at securing improvements. The legacy of underachievement has now been addressed across all year groups. Evidence from the school's rigorous tracking of pupils' progress and the scrutiny of pupils' work and lesson observations confirm further that pupils are making satisfactory progress.

Stoke Minster is a happy school which pupils are proud of and enjoy attending. They feel safe and pastoral care works well in supporting vulnerable pupils. Staff know individual pupils very well and make use of effective partnerships with agencies. Attendance has improved. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and pupils' safety and welfare are strongly promoted. Teaching is satisfactory overall but varies in its impact on learning. The school is making good progress in improving teaching but inconsistencies remain. Some lessons are characterised by work which does not match pupils' needs well enough. Curriculum provision is good with some imaginative cross-curricular work linking topics to writing, numeracy and science. It also helps pupils to develop a good understanding of cultural diversity. In the Early Years Foundation Stage the outdoor play area is not always used effectively.

The headteacher provides strong leadership with a relentless and uncompromising drive to tackle underperformance and underachievement. Many staff have risen to the challenge and expectations for the school are high. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory because the action taken by leaders to address weaknesses has been effective, particularly in English where all targets have been met. However, while there have been improvements in science, standards remain low. The work in science books show that the needs of different groups of pupils are not always met effectively. Self-evaluation is largely accurate, and the school development plan is well focused with appropriate priorities to take the school forward.

**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

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

- Increase pupils' progress in science by:
  - developing pupils' independent work so they develop practical skills
  - ensuring that teachers' planning meets the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - raising the challenge in lessons
  - using assessment more effectively in lesson planning to identify what pupils already understand in order to move their learning forward quickly
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to work together.
- Raise attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage across all areas of learning, particularly in mathematics by:
  - undertaking a more rigorous analysis of how well children are achieving
  - ensuring that there is systematic evaluation of the provision and how it affects learning to plan ongoing improvement
  - improving the use of the outdoor area to promote high-quality learning.
- About 40% of school's whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

In the lessons observed, learning was good when pupils worked cooperatively with full engagement. Their behaviour was well managed by the teacher, and tasks and activities were well matched to the needs of different pupils. In lessons where pupils' learning was only satisfactory, they had not been given the opportunity to share or extend their knowledge and learning in a group. Learning was limited due to a lack of suitable resources, which meant the less able struggled with tasks and the more able were not sufficiently challenged. Enjoyment of the learning was hindered and pupils' behaviour became restless.

Pupils' learning and progress are satisfactory in relation to their starting points. Attainment is average but low in science by the end of Year 6. Pakistani pupils and pupils who speak English as an additional language are making better progress than White British pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because of the effective support they receive in lessons. Prompt intervention is being used to tackle underachievement.

Pupils are polite and welcoming and the majority are good advocates for their school. They get on well with each other and understand right and wrong. They make a satisfactory contribution to the school and wider community by acting as play leaders and taking part in fundraising activities. Pupils say they feel safe in school and they say poor behaviour is dealt with effectively. They have a good understanding of how to stay

**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

safe. Parents and carers confirm that they feel their children are safe in school. The very few racist incidents are taken seriously by the school and dealt with effectively. Behaviour in lessons is mostly good but behaviour outside the class, in the canteen and playground can be boisterous, especially when ball games are not confined to one area. Pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles is satisfactory, they make sensible choices for lunch but opportunities for physical activities are limited. The school has worked hard to improve attendance, which is now above average, and the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school has been reduced. Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are improving due to an increasing focus on them but attainment is no better than satisfactory. There are many opportunities to develop effective information and communication technology (ICT) skills in cross-curricular work. Pupils' cultural development is good and developed well through the curriculum. The school has a number of good international links with schools in Ghana and Spain. In addition, language of the month is very popular among pupils.

*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>
<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>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective is the provision?

<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.

**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

The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory with an increasing proportion of lessons that are good. This is resulting in improvements to the quality of pupils' learning and their rates of progress. Pupils know what they are expected to learn and new ideas are explained clearly. Questioning is used well to probe and check pupils' understanding. Assessment information is used inconsistently in lesson planning. There is a lack of detail about how the needs of different ability groups will be met, particularly in science. As a result, in science pupils sometimes find tasks too hard or too easy. Marking is regular, encouraging and gives effective guidance on how to improve. Pupils regularly respond to teachers' comments in books. Most pupils can evaluate their own progress.

The curriculum provides a broad range of experiences for pupils. Cross-curricular work has been effective in developing literacy, which has led to a noticeable impact in improving standards in writing. Projects such as 'spy training' and 'communication' have been well organised and imaginative, incorporating opportunities for ICT skills and writing for different audiences.

Pastoral care is generally effective in supporting the needs of all pupils. Staff know pupils well. Home–school links are strong, particularly in improving behaviour and attendance. Vulnerable pupils are well supported. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language is monitored and coordinated more systematically than before. The school is beginning to provide more information to parents and carers on how to support their children's learning and what happens at 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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

There is a shared vision and ambition among senior leaders and actions are now leading to improvement and driving up the quality of provision and teaching. Leadership is a coherent unit. Monitoring and evaluation is increasingly rigorous and subject coordinators play a key role in this. Tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress and target setting is more robust, any underachievement is identified and interventions put in place. While leaders and managers have been successful in raising standards in English, they recognise that more needs to be done to increase the progress made by all year groups in all core subjects. Despite the regular monitoring of teaching, too much is still satisfactory. A range of professional development has taken place to improve

**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

teaching and learning, and co-coaching is proving to be successful with individual staff. Leaders are taking effective steps to secure high-quality teaching.

Governors are very committed and supportive of the school and recognise the work the headteacher has undertaken since it went into special measures. They discharge statutory duties effectively and understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have increased their knowledge about its work and performance so they can provide more effective challenge in underperforming areas.

The school works effectively in partnership with a range of external agencies and other educational institutions both to extend curricular opportunities and to provide support for pupils. These make a satisfactory contribution to the well-being of pupils. There are effective safeguarding procedures in place with all staff receiving training. The school recognises the needs of vulnerable pupils and gives high regard to their welfare. The school has a generally positive relationship with parents and carers. Systems are in place to ensure that parents and carers are informed of their children's progress. The school promotes equal opportunities by identifying pupils at risk of falling behind and intervening to close any gaps and undertakes a detailed analysis of the performance of all groups. However, inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and how effectively the needs of individual pupils are addressed in lessons. While policies designed to promote equality are in place, some have not been reviewed for some time. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily, overall. It is promoted particularly well through international links but the school has yet to complete all aspects of its strategy and evaluation.

*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>3</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>



**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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Nursery with skills at levels that are far below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in their learning and reach standards that are well below national averages by the beginning of Year 1. There has been a gradual improvement in all areas of learning except in mathematical development which has fallen considerably since last year. Adults provide good care and support to ensure that children enjoy learning and are happy at school. Behaviour is well managed and, as a result, children show positive attitudes to learning and are curious. There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Maximum use is not always made of the outdoor area, particularly at break times. Not all classes provide independent activities that make good links with learning and themes or topics. Leadership and management are satisfactory, and planning is thorough and links clearly to assessment. There are effective procedures in place to keep children safe. The inclusive nature of the school ensures that children's needs are met and they are well cared for. Relationships with parents and carers are positive and communication is effective.

The action plan for the Early Years Foundation stage lacks focus and rigorous evaluation.

*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

Questionnaires are not normally distributed to parents and carers for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 unless the inspections have specific reasons for the school to do so. In this inspection, account was taken of the school's recent survey of parents' and carers' views. The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the survey was low at 33%. The majority of those who did respond were supportive of the school. They stated that their children were safe and the school had a happy atmosphere. They raised concerns around homework, lunchtimes, communication, the website, clubs and activities. The school has already taken action on some of the issues raised by parents and carers by making homework expectations clearer and running numeracy workshops for them.

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

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.**



27 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stoke Minster C of E Aided Primary School, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 4EE

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome at your school. We all enjoyed talking with you and you helped us to find out about the school. The school is providing you with a satisfactory quality of education. These are the strengths of the school.

- It is a happy place; most of you enjoy school and feel safe.
- Your attendance is good.
- You learn about different cultures and languages and have links with schools in Ghana and Spain.
- You are polite and work together well.
- Staff know you well.
- The curriculum provides you with lots of exciting project work.
- The school's leaders and managers and dedicated and committed staff have been successful in improving the quality of education you receive.

We have asked the school to make the following changes so it can be even better.

- Help you to improve your progress in science.
- Increase the number of lessons which are good and help you to learn quickly.
- Help the younger children to develop their skills and understanding in all areas of learning but particularly mathematics.

The headteacher and school staff are already working hard to improve these areas and you can help them by continuing to work hard in all your lessons.

Our best wishes to you all

Yours faithfully

Davinder Dosanjh

Her Majesty's Inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**