

Stogumber Church of England VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123774
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	342344
Inspection date	10 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Denise Morris

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	25
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robin Williams
Headteacher	Lindsay Gabriel
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Station Road Stogumber TA4 3TQ
Telephone number	01984 656311
Fax number	01984 656311

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a very small rural school. It has recently changed from a first school to a primary school. All pupils are of White British origin. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. The number of pupils in each year group is very small with no pupils in the current Year 5 class. The school is part of a hard federation with another local school. There is one headteacher for the two schools and a joint governing body. The headteacher has been appointed on a temporary basis. Some of the teaching is shared between the two schools with pupils travelling the short distance between schools regularly. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are taught at the partner school whilst other pupils travel from one school to the other on a regular basis. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage for children from the age of four who share their classroom with pupils in Years 1 and 2.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Because of its very small size pupils are well known to the whole school community. As a result relationships are very strong. Parents are pleased with their local school and with the federation. 'We couldn't ask for a better start in life for our child' is a typical quote from a parent. Another wrote, 'The schools are working well together and the children are benefiting. I am proud that my child attends both schools and I would recommend them to others.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This results in excellent behaviour in and around the school. Pupils take part in all the activities offered with high levels of enthusiasm. During the inspection younger pupils, for example, greatly enjoyed their special history day as they learned about seaside holidays in Victorian times. They worked hard to create bunting for the classroom, trying to make their own contributions as colourful as possible. Pupils have a good sense of responsibility and regularly take on simple tasks to help improve their environment. They work well with the local community and play a full and active part in village life. Pupils say that they really enjoy school, but a small minority do not come to school as often as they could and, as a result, attendance is below average.

Provision for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the school with variable skills and knowledge but these are mainly below, and sometimes well below, the levels expected for children of their age. They make good progress during their Reception year, particularly in personal, emotional and social development and phonic skills. On entry to Year 1, pupils' skills are below average overall. However, achievement and progress across the school are good so that by the end of Year 6 standards are broadly average. Achievement is better in reading, writing and science than it is in mathematics. A good new writing programme is having a very positive impact on writing skills and particularly on the content of pupils' writing. Since its introduction many pupils have made more progress in writing than usual. Just occasionally the work provided does not challenge pupils as well as it should. This is particularly evident in mathematics lessons. As a result, a small minority of pupils, particularly the more able, do not achieve their full potential in the subject.

Teachers provide many exciting activities from the good quality curriculum which help to keep pupils focused and on task. The many visits and visitors to the school provide high quality enrichment ensuring that the vast majority of pupils enjoy their time at the school. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and older pupils are clear about what is expected of them and what their targets are. The school takes good care of its pupils. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements. The temporary headteacher, along with other leaders and staff, has created a positive ethos in which pupils thrive. Governors are supportive and frequently challenge the school about its decisions and priorities. As a result of the good improvements in standards, particularly in writing and in pupils' personal development, senior staff have demonstrated their effective leadership. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start during their Reception year. Many have little pre-school experience and enter school with skills that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress and achieve well in the joint Key Stage 1 class so that by the time they enter Year 1 many have attained the goals for their age in communication and in personal, social and

emotional development. Skills in knowledge and understanding of the world and in mathematical development, particularly in calculations, are weaker.

Children take part in all the activities offered with enthusiasm and they say that they enjoy school. They work and play together well. Staff take good care of them and effectively promote all aspects of their welfare. Children are safe and secure at school and particularly enjoy playing and learning in the good outdoor environment. For example, during the inspection, children were playing outside and were busy investigating how to make their model boats float. They quickly found that when they put too much play-dough into their boats they sank. They thought this was because it made their boats 'too heavy'. Good questioning helped them to understand why some things float and others do not. Children enjoy playing with friends from their partner school and sharing their activities with them. Just occasionally children are not given sufficient opportunities to develop their independence skills. For example, children are handed their coats and belongings by an adult at home time. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the level of challenge in lessons, particularly in mathematics, so that all pupils, including the more able, achieve their potential.
- Work closely with parents and support agencies to ensure that all pupils come to school as often as possible.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well during their time at the school. By the end of Year 6 standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average, although they vary due to the very small size of each year group. The vast majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 make very good progress in English. Pupils achieve better in reading and writing than they do in mathematics. This is because of the introduction of an exciting new writing programme that is helping improve the quality and content of their writing. Tracking shows that pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not achieve quite as well as other years. Occasionally, a few pupils, particularly the more able, are not challenged as well as they should be in mathematics lessons. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. Results in 2008 showed that standards have improved gradually over the past three years in reading, writing and mathematics and are now average. The school provides well for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All pupils benefit from the wider friendships and challenge provided by the regular sharing of lessons between the two schools.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils enjoy coming to school. One described it as 'her favourite place in the world'. The behaviour of pupils is excellent. They regularly help each other, share their learning and resources and respect others. They value the good work of the school council and the role it plays within the school. The council has been instrumental in improving the outdoor area and play activities for example. Pupils say they feel safe and secure at school and are confident that staff will deal fairly with any incidents. They are fully aware of the importance of leading healthy lives and many bring fruit to school for their packed lunches. They regularly grow plants in the school garden which

they sell at the village fete to raise money for charity. Pupils have excellent opportunities to involve themselves in the community. They enjoy helping at local events and regularly sing and perform in church. Pupils greatly value the link with a school in the Gambia which is helping to extend their understanding of different lifestyles and cultures. This link contributes well to their good preparation for their future lives. Pupils' independence is occasionally limited because of the high number of adults in some lessons. Attendance is a weakness. Not all pupils come to school as regularly as they could and a very small minority regularly miss school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships in lessons are strong and, as a result, pupils behave well and enjoy lessons. The teaching of writing is particularly good, leading to some very good progress by many pupils. Teachers often create real life situations to give pupils ideas and to extend their language skills. This was evident during a history activity when adults dressed in costume and used real resources from the past to develop pupils' understanding of how things change over time. As a result, pupils were able to use creative language in their discussion and their written work improved. Questions are used well in literacy lessons but are not always used well enough in mathematics lessons to move pupils on to the next steps. Consequently, a few pupils, particularly the more able, do not always achieve as well in mathematics as they do in literacy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Strategic planning across the federation means that there are improved opportunities to enrich pupils' learning. For example, there is specialist provision for sports coaching, music and the teaching of French which is valued highly by pupils and parents. Enrichment of the curriculum through visits and visitors is good. During the inspection pupils talked excitedly about the forthcoming visit of people from their link school in Gambia. They were able to explain many aspects of life in the Gambia that are different from their own. Opportunities for independent learning are not always evident in planning. Extra-curricular provision is extensive and many pupils attend the provision offered at the partner school. The acquisition of a mini-bus for the two federated schools means that pupils can move between the sites safely and quickly.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for by the whole school community. Relationships between children and staff are very good so that there is a positive working atmosphere in all areas of the school. Child protection and other statutory responsibilities meet requirements. All teachers are first aid trained. The transfer of pupils between the two federated schools is handled well. Some pupils say they felt unsettled by the travelling at first but that they quickly got used to the process and now enjoy working with others. Academic guidance is good. Pupils' work is assessed and tracked regularly and there is a clear overview of how much progress each pupil has made. Pupils are fully involved in setting and measuring their own targets and older pupils are aware of how to progress to the next level. Procedures to improve attendance are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

There have been many significant changes to the school over the past few years. The federation with another small local school has been successfully achieved and now provides clear opportunities for both schools to move forward. Teaching is often shared between the schools and pupils benefit from sharing lessons and developing wider friendships. Staff have adapted well to the changes and the federation has been securely established. The headteacher of the two schools, although temporary, provides strong leadership and, together with other leaders, is helping to improve standards. The introduction of the new writing programme, for example, has been very successful in developing writing skills. Governors are supportive and helpful. They know the school well and, as a result of effective self-evaluation, know what needs improving. They are active in monitoring the work of the school and are regular visitors to lessons. A particular strength of leadership is the way in which it is developing good community cohesion in all areas. Local links are exceptionally good with pupils regularly involved in all aspects of village life. The exciting link with a school in Gambia has resulted in real understanding by pupils about life in that country. The school is actively developing links with schools in other parts of Britain.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

11 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stogumber Cof E Primary School, Taunton TA4 3TQ

Thank you for your help during our recent inspection of your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about all the things you do at school. I particularly enjoyed having lunch with some of you from Year 2. You told me all about your excitement at the forthcoming visit of your guests from Gambia. I was very pleased to see how many of you brought healthy food in your packed lunches. Lots of you had at least one piece of fruit. This letter is to tell you some of the things we found out about your school.

Stogumber is a good school. It helps you to do well in your lessons. You like your teachers and they give you some exciting work to do. You particularly enjoy the visits that you go on and the fact that you have a mini-bus to take you on your trips. You are very lucky to have this. You are making good progress in your work. You do best in literacy and your writing has really improved recently.

We really liked the way that you work hard to keep fit. You use the outdoor area very well. You like working in the school garden and regularly do lots of exciting things with the local community and with your partner school.

Leaders of your school keep you safe and secure. We are asking them to do two things to help your school become even better.

- Make sure you all do as well as you can, particularly in mathematics.
- Make sure you all come to school regularly.

You could help with these by working hard in your maths lessons and by making sure you come to school as often as you can.

Thank you again for your help and good luck for your futures.

Yours faithfully

Denise Morris Lead Inspector