

Nether Stowey Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123789
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	343784
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen McShane HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dean Gill
Headteacher	Jeremy Weedon (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	17 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. All teachers and eight lessons were observed. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and a representative of the local authority. They observed the schools work, looked at pupils books, and scrutinised the data the school has collected on pupils progress since the last inspection. Forty-six parental questionnaires were returned and examined by the inspection team, along with staff and pupil questionnaires.

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

the current learning and progress of pupils throughout the school, particularly girls and the more able pupils

whether the actions taken over the last year have been sufficient to rectify the major weaknesses in the school identified by the last inspection

whether there are appropriate plans in place and sufficient capacity to improve progress and raise attainment further.

Information about the school

Nether Stowey Primary School is smaller than average. Its roll has recently fallen and it now has some mixed-aged classes. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, although the numbers vary between different year groups. Most of these pupils have specific or moderate learning difficulties. The school has a before- and after-school club and makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in its Reception class.

At the last inspection the school was given a notice to improve. Significant improvement was required in relation to leadership and management. In March 2010 one of Her Majesty's Inspectors made a monitoring visit and was of the opinion that the school was making inadequate progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

The school is currently led by an acting headteacher. A new permanent headteacher has been appointed and will join the school in September 2010. There have been some changes in staff and to the governing body.

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

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Since the last inspection, staff and governors have worked hard to address the issues raised. They have ensured that leadership and management are satisfactory and pupils are making faster progress and are having wider opportunities. In the last year the school has begun to move closer toward the governors vision that Nether Stowey should be a safe and happy place at the heart of the village community life and that its pupils should be successful.

The schools data suggest that this years results in the Key Stage 2 national tests, particularly in mathematics, will be better than 2009. There is also evidence that a large number of pupils, including girls and more able pupils, are now making accelerated progress in English and mathematics. This is a result of greatly improved assessment and tracking procedures that have enabled teachers to identify pupils at risk of underachievement and to swiftly address concerns through targeted interventions. Children make good progress in all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Although it has improved since the last inspection, teaching remains only satisfactory overall. There is a clear structure to lessons. Resources and activities are clearly planned so no time is lost and pupils make satisfactory progress. Progress is not good because learning objectives, questioning, and activities are not precise enough. Ongoing assessment of pupils understanding does not lead to the teacher amending their plans during the lesson. Often, pupils have to sit for too long listening to the teacher and lessons are very predictable so they become bored.

Governors, senior and middle leaders and all staff are passionate that the improvement of the school continues. They have a sound grasp of the schools strengths and areas for further development. They are becoming increasingly knowledgeable and confident and have satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. Monitoring of activities is regular. Evaluation of impact is weaker and at times the follow-up of improvement activities is not systematic or fast enough to ensure they have made a difference to pupils learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By Spring 2011 improve teaching and learning so that it is consistently good by:
- using pupil assessment information to plan lesson objectives, success criteria and activities so that they challenge all pupils to make good progress

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- checking understanding and amending activities accordingly during lessons
- varying teaching styles and activities so that they enthuse and motivate pupils more.
- Further improve leadership and management by:
- precisely evaluating the impact of improvement activities and using this to inform future plans
- systematically challenging weaknesses, including those in teaching, so that they are resolved quickly.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Achievement is satisfactory. More pupils in the school are now working at or above age-related expectations. The school expects that previously weak teaching of the current Year 6 pupils will have an adverse impact on the 2010 national tests results. In lessons, pupils are diligent and hard-working and, in the large majority of year groups, present a satisfactory standard of work. Pupils are successfully acquiring specific new skills or tackling misunderstandings in the small-group literacy and numeracy sessions that are now being provided. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall. Some pupils receiving targeted work have made good and better progress in aspects of their reading and spelling.

Pupils behave well. They are thoughtful and care for each other. They know right from wrong, are polite and courteous. When provided with interesting activities they are enthusiastic learners. Pupils feel very safe and well cared for at the school and told inspectors that everyone is friendly. They trust the adults and are confident that any problems will be sorted out. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet. Pupils are enthusiastic in physical education lessons and successful in local sporting events. They know how to lead a healthy lifestyle, including the dangers of smoking and drugs. Pupils are knowledgeable about other cultures.

The school council has become more effective and influences improvements in the school and plans charity events. The school has built upon and increased its links with outside agencies so pupils now make a positive contribution through contact with a range of organisations including the villages French twin, the National Trust and a local special school, as well as to local community events.

Attendance is improving and is now above average. Pupils apply their basic skills of literacy and numeracy in lessons satisfactorily. When opportunities arise it is clear that they can also work together effectively and use information and communication technology for the presentation of their work.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There is now much more consistency in the quality of teaching throughout the school. Strong adult-pupil relationships in most classes are clearly evident. Classroom environments and the use of literacy and numeracy targets and displays to support learning have been improved to a consistent standard. Learning objectives are usually shared with pupils and different activities are provided for different groups with support deployed accordingly. There is often a steady pace and pupils complete their work. Too often, however, pupils are asked to sit and listen for too long and sessions are dominated by questions directed at individual pupils and others are just expected to listen. Learning objectives are not consistently informed by the teachers knowledge of pupils and then matched to the needs of different groups of pupils and so do not ensure that all pupils are challenged sufficiently.

Assessment has clearly improved. Regular monitoring and tracking of each pupils progress is in place. Marking has improved and the schools new policy is being applied well so that pupils are regularly praised and encouraged to think about development points. The impact of marking is variable in improving pupils work because teachers do not always check on whether their comments have been acted upon. This is similar to other assessment activities in the classrooms, for example traffic lights and thumbs up to check understanding that are not consistently effective as teachers do not amend their plans according to the pupils feedback

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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The school has taken a number of steps to improve the curriculum this year and the pupils have had much wider experiences. During the inspection pupils writing was clearly stimulated by the recent trips to the seaside or to a nature reserve so they were enthused to write information leaflets or poems on Wings after watching birds and insects. Singing and dance are now being enjoyed once again. A wide range of after-school clubs is available.

Care, guidance and support are particular strengths of Nether Stowey. Adults know pupils well and are concerned for their well-being. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities have detailed programmes that are carefully monitored and evaluated. Effective partnerships exist to support any pupil who needs additional interventions. A few parents felt that behaviour was not well managed. Inspectors observed strong whole-school behaviour management techniques that enabled learning to continue with little disruption. The very welcoming and well-managed before- and after-school club is very effective in providing wrap-around care and giving pupils a good start and ending to their day. Healthy and nutritious school lunches are provided by a trust managed by parents.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher has steered the school effectively in the last year so that it has been able to improve, developing teamwork and maintaining morale. The subject leaders have used the local authority support well. They are now confident to analyse pupil progress data and take effective action. Governors have a clear understanding of their role, which they carry out diligently. They have taken some difficult decisions, managed an effective recruitment procedure and, through asking searching questions, are now holding the school to account.

Regular monitoring of teaching, including scrutiny of planning and pupils work, is in place and staff are clear what has to be done next. They appreciate that improvements to ensure teaching is consistently good have not been fast enough and remain the priority.

Relationships with parents and carers have improved, even though a few parents still feel that the school does not take sufficient account of their views. Newsletters, an open door policy, letters about targets and work, ongoing contact with the acting headteacher and governors and formal consultation through questionnaires and about policies mean

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that liaison with parents is now good.

The school is rigorous in ensuring that the child protection policy and safeguarding procedures are appropriate. Governors and all staff take their responsibilities very seriously. There are good procedures in place to ensure effective multi-agency working and all work in this area is effective and appropriately monitored. The school ensures that the progress of different groups is monitored and that no group underachieves. The school has worked hard to address deficiencies in community cohesion and now actively works to prepare its pupils for life locally and in a national and international community. Many partnerships support the work of the school and many broaden the curriculum, with a local college supporting gardening and opportunities such as Bikeability, samba tuition and working with the Quantock wardens.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in all areas of learning. Children play and cooperate very happily together. Planning is good and there is a wide range of exciting activities provided in an interesting classroom and outdoor area with learning zones that engage children very well. Activities effectively build on recent activities, for example the beach trip, and challenge children to learn more. There are outstanding relationships between staff and children. Childrens progress is monitored well. Care and welfare arrangements are fully in place. There is good communication with parents and carers and effective transition arrangements. The recently appointed Early Years leader has been very effective in improving practice and provision and has a good understanding of the strengths and priorities for future developments.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Most parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire are happy with their child's experience at the school. A few replied negatively to the questions. The issues that were identified, particularly communication and behaviour, were raised with the school and are addressed in the report. A number of parents and carers made positive comments about the school, particularly recognising the recent dramatic and massive improvements and in seeing it as a happier place that has turned around.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Nether Stowey 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 150 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	63	16	35	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	67	13	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	37	20	43	3	7	2	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	39	22	48	2	4	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	20	43	21	46	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	35	25	54	3	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	33	27	59	3	7	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)	11	24	25	54	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	30	26	57	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	30	20	43	6	13	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	35	19	41	6	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	41	20	43	4	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	54	17	37	3	7	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.



26 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nether Stowey Church of England Primary School, Nether Stowey TA5 1NX

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed seeing you working and playing together. Thank you to those who filled in the questionnaires and to the school council who met with us. Almost all of you told us that you enjoyed school. You also told us that things had improved in the last year.

We found out that:

your school is a satisfactory school

your school is improving and many of you are now making better progress

you feel safe and do lots of things for your school and the local community

you are doing some more interesting things, like trips and outings, that you enjoy

your attendance is getting better

teaching is satisfactory

adults care for you well

the staff and the governors have worked very hard to improve your school.

So that your school keeps improving, we have asked the schools leaders to:

ensure that teaching is always good by making sure you are always challenged and interested in lessons and that adults check your understanding during lessons

make sure that where there are still things that need improving they tackle them quickly.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best.

We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen McShane

Her Majesty's Inspector

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