

Stafford Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114469
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	346435
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Patricia Metham 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.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	359
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Barry Frankham
Headteacher	Mrs Mandy Gard
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, saw 11 teachers and held meetings with parents, governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at data on pupils' attainment and progress, at schemes of work, policies, the school improvement plan and reports from advisers working with the school.

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

attainment, particularly in English and mathematics

teachers' skills in assessment and planning

the breadth and balance of the curriculum

the effectiveness of leadership and management in setting priorities for school improvement and in raising attainment

procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment.

Information about the school

Stafford Junior is a large primary school, with most pupils coming from White British backgrounds. Few are in the early stages of acquiring English. The proportion with specific learning needs and/or disabilities is smaller than average; these mostly involve moderate learning difficulties. The proportion eligible for free school meals is also relatively small.

This inspection comes after a series of monitoring visits following an inspection in January 2009 that placed the school in special measures. In 2009, inspectors highlighted the need to raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics, by ensuring that expectations were appropriately high and that teachers assessed pupils' progress accurately and used the information effectively in lesson planning. Leadership and management were directed to ensure that the curriculum met National Curriculum requirements and would build learning systematically throughout the school. The school was also directed to ensure that statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils were met in full.

Since that inspection the governing body has been substantially restructured. The senior advisory headteacher, seconded to the school shortly after the previous inspection, has been appointed as substantive headteacher, supported by a newly appointed deputy.

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

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The school has improved significantly since the inspection in 2009 and now provides a good quality of education. Under the purposeful and highly persuasive leadership of the headteacher and her deputy, expectations have risen and the morale of staff and pupils is buoyant. Vivid classroom and corridor displays celebrate a breadth of achievement and highlight the school's culture of mutual respect and its shared pleasure in learning. One pupil clearly spoke for many when she asserted, 'We really do commit to our motto, Achievement for all.'

Attainment has risen sharply and is now broadly in line with national averages.

Improvement in English and mathematics has been particularly strong. This upward trend has been driven by rigorous monitoring and analysis of pupils' progress, used effectively to target support for pupils at risk of underachievement and to set priorities for curriculum development. All groups are making good progress. Benefiting from well-directed professional development, teachers confidently assess pupils' levels of attainment and implement effective strategies to meet individual needs. Pupils are willing learners, keen to meet expectations, and their behaviour is exemplary. They work well together, happily sharing ideas and productively assessing each other's work when given clear guidance on what to look for. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning and to initiate lines of enquiry are limited. Well-directed support ensures that those with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress as well as others, but the most able pupils are not always fully challenged in lessons.

A collaborative approach to planning is providing pupils with a broad and stimulating range of experiences whilst ensuring that all statutory requirements are met.

Partnerships with local secondary and primary schools and with a local university enhance pupils' learning and provide opportunities for teachers to extend their professional skills. The school offers a good variety of extra-curricular activities, but participation is patchy and opportunities for learning outside the classroom are not fully developed.

Ambitious and effective school leadership underpins pupils' cheerful commitment to 'achievement for all'. With strong support from the restructured governing body, the headteacher and her senior team have raised expectations and, based on well-grounded evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development, have implemented a thorough programme of review and revision. Exceptionally thorough procedures to ensure pupils' safety and well-being have been established and are regularly reviewed. Rising standards, more consistently good teaching and a sense of purpose shared at all levels indicate that capacity for further improvement is good.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen attainment by:
 - ensuring that more able pupils are consistently and appropriately challenged
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their learning.
- Enhance curriculum provision by:
- extending opportunities for learning beyond the classroom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment is now broadly average, with evidence of continuing improvement, and the progress made by all groups is good, although the most able would benefit from greater challenge. Participation in the 'Making Good Progress' programme has brought additional funding for learning support and the introduction of single level tests is having a positive impact on pupils' motivation and sense of achievement.

Following careful analysis of progress made by different groups of pupils, successful steps have been taken to raise girls' attainment in mathematics and to develop boys' interest and skills in writing. The gender gap is closing steadily. Supported by well-directed professional development, teachers now confidently assess pupils' current knowledge and skills, with their assessments endorsed by recent results in national tests. Interventions such as in-class support and one-to-one tuition are timely and productive.

Pupils are emphatic that they feel safe and are confident that their contribution to the school's development is valued. They are keen to take on responsibility, for example as play leaders, and treat each other and adults with consideration. Older pupils establish links with children about to move up from local infant schools, whom they then mentor so that this transition is made easier. Pupils' competence in literacy and numeracy and their confident use of information and communication technology are complemented by their experience of leadership, negotiation and teamwork in lessons and through the school's house system. All this gives them a good foundation for the future. Pupils understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and most put it into practice. Attendance is in line with national averages, although a few families persist in taking children out of school for holidays during term time. Pupils' moral and social development is strong but opportunities to engage with those from different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds are limited. Pupils' spiritual development is appropriately supported through assemblies and subject topics.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The proportion of teaching that is good or better has increased significantly since the last inspection. Amongst the strengths observed were secure and enthusiastically communicated subject knowledge, productive use of information about pupils' levels and progress to shape lesson planning and to set targets, good questioning skills, confident application of up-to-date technology and firm but un confrontational behaviour management. Whilst there is some inconsistency, the marking of written work generally combines encouragement with clear guidance on how to improve. Pupils are encouraged to learn from each other, with peer-assessment now well established and, on most occasions, effectively supported by 'steps to success' against which pupils measure each others' learning. Teaching assistants are involved in planning and make an important contribution in lessons, in work with small groups of less able pupils and in one-to-one support for those with specific learning needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils' evident enjoyment of learning reflects how effectively the curriculum combines full coverage of statutory requirements with the flexibility and imagination needed to meet individual needs and support different learning styles. Pupils are taught in ability-based groups for mathematics, which they find helpful. The most able have the opportunity to work at a higher level with older pupils. A focus on raising numeracy and literacy levels across the curriculum is proving effective. Pupils are encouraged to apply knowledge and skills from one area to their learning in another. Opportunities are increasing for the most able to undertake activities beyond the classroom. Under the aegis of the deputy headteacher, for example, Year 5's 'Stafford Bloggers' present a weekly review of teaching and learning at the school. Also each week, a gifted and

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talented pupil writes a story chapter and puts it onto the school's intranet for comment and suggestions from other pupils ' a lively and productive form of peer review. Video-conferencing with schools overseas provides pupils with memorable experiences, for example observations of the Australian night sky, which are then built on within the main curriculum. While participation in the broad range of extra-curricular activities routinely offered is limited, events such as 'Family Week' and the residential trip for older pupils are well supported.

Pupils are confident that they are safe and that difficulties will be quickly and effectively resolved grows from the school's fine network of pastoral care. Transition from one stage of pupils' education to the next is managed with impressive care and attention to detail. Vulnerable pupils are carefully monitored and supported within school and there is good liaison with specialist expertise beyond school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Strong and sustained improvement is driven by the ambitious and practical strategic vision promoted by the headteacher, her leadership team and the governors. Financial planning and controls are good, systematically implementing priorities set out in the school's development plan. Extensive consultation with staff, pupils, parents and carers has ensured that the school development plan is widely understood and confidently implemented. Improvements in teaching have been achieved through well-directed professional development and the systematic monitoring of classroom practice and its impact on pupils' learning. Pupils benefit from specialist resources and expertise, in science for example, available through partnerships with neighbouring secondary schools and a local university. Liaison with parents and carers has strengthened. Attendance at consultation evenings is high and the newly formed Arrow Group is an effective channel for communication and consultation.

The school very effectively promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination, for example through its well-targeted support for vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs. The school's business manager, the special needs coordinator, parents and four pupils with special needs and/or disabilities form a working party to review and advise on equality issues. They have completed an audit of the school site and are currently evaluating the curriculum. Extremely robust safeguarding procedures are in place, including systematic risk assessments and

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continual review of health and safety issues. Child protection training for all staff is a regular part of the school's programme. Individual case studies demonstrate the thoroughness of care for vulnerable students. The school is a very cohesive community and pupils' understanding of the wider community is well developed through project work, links with primary and secondary schools and contact with local services. Video-conferencing with schools in very different contexts, Manchester for example, is being developed to extend pupils' awareness of Britain as a multi-cultural community. A global dimension is being added through links with a school in Shanghai. These projects are in their early stages.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so. Inspectors met with a group of parents and also reviewed feedback from a survey of parents' views undertaken early in the school year. In discussion, parents stressed the improvements made over recent months, including more effective teaching, better support for pupils' individual needs and more helpful consultation. Over 90% of the 104 parents who contributed to the school's survey felt that their children enjoyed coming to school. There was less certainty about whether or not the school had sufficiently high expectations to help their children achieve, but about 70% of parents responded positively.

These responses were broadly in line with inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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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.



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9 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stafford Junior School, Eastbourne BN22 8UA

My colleague and I greatly appreciated the friendliness and openness with which you helped us find out how well your school is doing. We agree with you and your teachers that yours is now a good school.

We were pleased to know that you feel safe in school - 'Absolutely!' as one of you said - and to see that you understand and take seriously the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The school's improving attendance record shows that you are happy to be there, although some of you miss important days of school when you and your families take holidays during term times. We found that you are keen to do your best and are always ready to help each other. We noted that your overall levels of attainment are rising. You are making good progress, well supported by excellent pastoral care and much good teaching.

In order to ensure that your school continues to get better and better, we have asked your headteacher and her staff to do the following things:

- ' ensure that standards keep on rising by presenting you with increasing levels of challenge, including those of you who find some of the work relatively easy, and by encouraging you to take the initiative more often in your learning

- ' develop more opportunities for you to learn through activities that take place outside the classroom.

You can help by ensuring that you do not lose out on important learning by missing days of school.

I look forward to seeing Stafford Junior School go from strength to strength.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Metham

Her Majesty's Inspector

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