

Stanton School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110365
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	356726
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2011
Reporting inspector	June Woolhouse

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs R Woodhall
Headteacher	Miss H Nicholson
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 22 lessons, observed all 14 teachers and held meetings with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, teaching staff, representatives of the governing body and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school development plan, safeguarding documents, school policies and pupils' work in their exercise books, displays and a DVD. They analysed information from 42 parent questionnaires in addition to those from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which teaching is good enough to raise attainment and increase pupil achievement for all groups.
- How effective leaders and managers are at all levels in assessing and tracking pupils' progress and planning challenging lessons to overcome the legacy of underachievement.
- The extent to which the school's capacity to sustain the planned improvements is sufficiently embedded. The effectiveness of support, guidance and care, especially of pupils who join the school later.

Information about the school

Stanton is an average-sized junior school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average; their needs include emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, hearing impairment and speech, language and communication needs. An above-average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school holds the Activemark, Artsmark silver and Extended Schools awards, Healthy Schools status and the Football Association Charter Standard development mark.

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

Stanton is a good school which has improved in several aspects since the previous inspection. Its challenging circumstances are clearly understood by the headteacher and she has succeeded very well in bringing together a team of highly committed teachers and support staff. They share her vision and determination to expect and deliver the very best for all pupils. As a result, historically low attainment in English and mathematics has been improved so that attainment is now broadly average and pupils' achievement is good. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and those pupils whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable.

The headteacher and her highly effective senior leadership team have carefully chosen two very structured teaching programmes for English and mathematics which are at the core of pupils' learning in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics. Pupils' learning is accurately assessed and then tracked rigorously throughout the school, informing teachers of what must be taught next. Teaching is monitored with similar precision and any weaknesses or divergence from the required teaching programmes are rectified. As a result, teaching and learning are consistently good. English and mathematics are systematically taught by all staff and careful grouping of pupils into small sets gives them the most favourable conditions for learning. Teachers and support staff are able to give a great deal of individual attention to pupils who start school with below average skills and this results in successful learning and good progress both in academic work and personal development. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is consistently good, they enjoy learning and show respect for, and consideration towards, each other and their teachers. Progress accelerates as pupils become accustomed to these high expectations and the challenging targets set for their work and behaviour.

Some new members joined the governing body recently and although they know their statutory duties, what is happening in school is not yet evaluated with sufficient rigour. The senior leadership team accurately judges how well pupils are learning through a regular and tightly organised programme of classroom observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. They also have a very accurate view of the school and local community. School policies and procedures are in place, governors are increasingly involved in partnership with a dynamic and talented staff and, consequently, there is a good capacity for sustained improvement.

The curriculum is well organised into interesting themes, allowing pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects. Good provision in physical education, music and art add to opportunities for active learning. The school is justifiably proud of its recently awarded Artsmark silver award. Pupils' care, guidance and support are good, with particularly effective diagnoses of those with specific learning needs or who join the school

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at different times throughout the key stage. Teachers manage behaviour consistently well and pupils' successes are celebrated together. This inclusive learning culture, where all pupils are treated equally, and an emphasis on regular monitoring of equality of opportunity have a very positive impact on pupils' personal, social and emotional development.

Good partnerships with a range of agencies enhance provision for sport and pupils' welfare. The school is working hard to encourage parents and carers to become more involved in their children's education, with some success, but realises there is more to be done. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory and pupils say they feel safe in school and know who they can talk to when they need further support. There have been recent improvements to ensure that the site is secure but the governing body has yet to monitor policies and procedures regularly. In school, pupils from all backgrounds get along well. Events and involvement in the local community are beginning to have a greater impact but there are fewer opportunities to learn about the richness and diversity of national or global communities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the impact of the governing body by:
 - increasing its understanding of its statutory roles and responsibilities
 - increasing understanding of performance data and how the school is performing when compared with national standards
 - monitoring regularly safeguarding policies and procedures
 - evaluating the school's impact on how well it is engaging with the local and wider community.
- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - embedding the structured teaching programmes for English and mathematics, particularly the latest comprehension strategies
 - building on good practice to ensure that learning is consistently good or better.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress in lessons and take an active part in their learning. Year 6 pupils, for example, worked well in pairs when they were exploring how to identify particular moods and feelings in a real-life teen magazine text and then replying in the role of an agony aunt. They recorded their ideas using a good range of appropriate vocabulary which had been discussed previously so that meanings were clear. They showed that they understood how the original writer felt and responded using well-composed sentences in their replies. In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils collected data for themselves and understood how to record them in tally charts. They discussed their findings enthusiastically with each other and also explained clearly the extent to which they had understood how to represent them in a graph. The consistent emphasis on oral practice, especially to develop vocabulary and recognise the features of well-composed

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texts, mean that pupils who speak English as an additional language also make good progress.

Pupils start school with skills below those expected for the age group. Attainment has improved in English and mathematics because of improved teaching and organising pupils into smaller ability groups for reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are on track to improve further this year because they have already benefited from the structured teaching in these subjects. There is no significant difference in the progress of boys and girls, or that of minority ethnic groups and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities from their peers.

Pupils' commitment to healthy lifestyles is demonstrated in the school gaining Healthy Schools status, Activemark and Football Association awards. They are articulate in the school council and comment knowledgeably on aspects of safety, such as the new fencing around the school, how adults deal promptly with any poor behaviour and how this makes them feel safer. They participate in charity-fundraising events and take part in local community activities such as singing at church and at a retirement home. Pupils are involved in enterprise activities and their regular use of information and communication technology means they are adequately prepared for secondary school. Attendance is average and is much improved because of the persistent monitoring by senior leaders. Pupils are respectful of each other, irrespective of background or belief, and learn about a range of different cultures to reinforce these attitudes.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

The planning of literacy and numeracy lessons is of high quality. This addresses a wide range of different needs and focuses well on pupils' active learning, leading to consistently good teaching. Many lessons exhibit features of outstanding learning because teachers apply a very effective balance of instruction, explanation and opportunities for active learning. They follow up pupils' independent work with accurate assessment, good questioning and support so that pupils understand what they have learned and what they must do next. Pupils respond well to this structure and can collaborate in tasks because they are working at a similar level of difficulty. Teaching assistants are well trained and deployed to small groups, and their contribution is an important part of the school's success in improving pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. Access to whiteboards and computers all contribute to good learning opportunities and the chance to solve problems independently. A comprehension programme, new this year, is already enabling pupils to write with more fluency because, again, teachers adhere to the structure of the scheme. Targets are demanding and pupils are sufficiently challenged and well taught to reach them. Work is carefully marked and comments are constructive so that pupils know how to improve. A few lessons result in satisfactory rather than good rates of progress because teachers are consolidating their understanding of the teaching programmes or are less experienced in their teaching.

The curriculum successfully meets the needs of most groups of pupils. Good quality computer facilities enable pupils to research information for themselves. The provision for physical education, with specialist teaching and a wide range of extra-curricular sports and games, contributes well to pupils' personal, social and health education. The school successfully enables talented pupils to move to club activities in football and athletics. Pupils comment enthusiastically about their residential trips and the visitors who come into school to talk to them.

Good quality care, guidance and support are at the core of the school's work and pupils respond favourably in this nurturing environment. Pupils with individual learning or personal needs are identified quickly, catered for appropriately and make good progress in learning because they are settled and secure at school. There are good links with a range of specialist agencies providing further support, especially for vulnerable pupils and those who speak English as an additional language. Transition arrangements into school and when pupils leave to go to secondary school are well managed. A well-attended breakfast club provides a healthy and organised start to the day for many pupils who also have time to complete homework or relax with their friends.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's weaknesses and have successfully implemented consistent planning and effective teaching to eradicate the legacy of underachievement. Regular observation of teaching and learning is followed up with further support when weaknesses are identified. Performance management is robust and challenging targets are set for all teachers. As a result of this effective professional development, pupils' attainment has improved and progress accelerated, particularly in the last two years. Subject leaders are fully involved in coordinating planning and monitoring progress. Pupil progress in all classes is monitored very thoroughly using a well-established tracking system.

The governing body supports the school satisfactorily but some governors are new and not fully trained in important matters of interpreting school results and how to challenge and support school leaders. There is no evidence of discrimination amongst pupils because equality of opportunity is promoted well through careful analysis of individual needs and systematic monitoring of progress. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and school records have been refined recently. The school is continuing to find ways to engage parents and carers more in their children's education, including using a very informative website. Community cohesion is promoted well in school, resulting in a harmonious ethos where all pupils are valued and respect each other's differences. Links with national and global communities, for example with a South African school, are satisfactory, although the impact on pupils' understanding has not been fully evaluated by the governing body.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Views of parents and carers

Most of the parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire expressed very positive views. Most parents agree that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps their children safe. Inspectors investigated some individual concerns raised by a very small number of parents and carers about how well the school helps their children to make progress, deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour and takes account of suggestions and concerns but judged these aspects of provision to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stanton School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 204 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	48	18	43	3	7	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	22	52	15	36	4	10	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	17	40	19	45	5	12	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	38	20	48	3	7	3	7
The teaching is good at this school	15	36	22	52	5	12	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	36	22	52	4	10	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	40	20	48	4	10	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)	15	36	21	50	4	10	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	33	23	55	2	5	2	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	38	19	45	5	12	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	33	22	52	5	12	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	15	36	23	55	2	5	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	50	16	38	3	7	2	5

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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



17 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stanton School, Milton Keynes MK13 7BE

Thank you so much for helping us with the inspection of your school recently. We think that your school is good and you are making good progress in your learning. We enjoyed our visit and were really impressed with how you behave towards each other and help each other in lessons. Everyone was polite and considerate in class and around the school. We found that because you are working very hard and listening to your teachers, you are achieving much to be proud of and have improved since the last time inspectors came to see you. Attainment is steadily rising and in both English and mathematics is similar to that in most other junior schools. This is the result of good teaching by your teachers who know that they must continue to push you to do as well as you can to keep at this level and improve further.

We have asked staff and leaders to concentrate on some important things to ensure that you do improve. We have asked that you carry on the good work in English and mathematics so that attainment will rise again this year. We have also asked the governors of the school, who are responsible for keeping you safe and making sure everybody does their job properly, to monitor that this is happening.

We hope the rest of the year goes well and you succeed in your lessons and the activities you do after school, especially in sport, which we know you are good at.

Keep up the good work and continue to work hard.

Yours sincerely

June Woolhouse Lead inspector

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