

Stambridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114848
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	357634
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Richard Blackmore

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	69
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Betty South
Headteacher	Maureen Sealeaf
Date of previous school inspection	12 September 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited six lessons and observed three different teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at pupils' books and documentation related to safeguarding, pupils' progress, teachers' assessments, development planning and curriculum organisation. In total, 37 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed.

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

- What is the rate of progress and standards in mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 2?
- How well is assessment used by teachers to ensure the curriculum provides enough opportunities for quick progress in mathematics?
- What is the impact of actions taken by school leaders in improving provision, particularly the quality of teaching?

Information about the school

Most pupils who attend this below average size school are from White British backgrounds and no pupils speak English as an additional language or are at the early stages of learning English. A lower than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals and the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school's provision has been acknowledged by a number of awards, including Investors in People, Bronze Eco Award and Healthy Schools Status.

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

This is a good school. One parent summed up the views of many saying, 'It is a real pleasure to be part of such a wonderful school community'. It has a number of strong features, particularly pupils' personal development. This is because each pupil is known very well by all staff. They make good academic progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the high priority adults give to developing the children's social and language skills. This good rate of progress continues as pupils move through the school. Consequently, by the time they leave in Year 6, their attainment is above average. This represents good achievement. However, pupils have not always done as well in mathematics as they have in English and progress in mathematics has varied across the school. The issues have been rigorously addressed. Standards are increasingly even across each stage of the school and the gap between pupils' progress in English and mathematics is closing. Despite attendance being satisfactory pupils learn well because teaching is consistently good and there are very good classroom relationships.

Pupils' understanding of making healthy choices is good; they know a great deal about how to stay fit and healthy through diet and exercise. This is seen in the high take up of the impressive range of clubs such as the highly energetic skipping club. Pupils relish the chance to take responsibility and make telling contributions. This is demonstrated in the way older pupils take time to care for younger pupils and support the school routines, for example by distributing and collecting seat mats for assembly.

Lessons are well planned, purposeful and quickly paced to ensure pupils are given work that is appropriate to their abilities and understanding. Teachers use interesting resources, including information and communication technology (ICT), to motivate pupils and maintain interest. However, personalised targets and marking do not always show pupils how to improve their work to help pupils move to the next stages of learning. Although the school's good curriculum is enriched by the many and varied activities that are offered beyond the classroom, opportunities for higher attaining pupils to think at a high enough level are limited. Parents appreciate the caring and sensitive approach the school adopts and pupils themselves speak with much appreciation of the availability and sensitivity of staff if they have any problems.

Senior leaders and governors have a good understanding of what the school does well and the areas for improvement. They have a detailed and structured plan for further improvements. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion which promotes pupils' understanding of diversity but leaders and governors have not fully evaluated the impact of these experiences on pupils' attitudes to differences in beliefs and cultures. Effective systems are used to track pupils' progress, providing a clear picture of the impact of the school's provision focused on how well pupils are doing. These

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developments, along with the good overall development since the school's last inspection, indicate that there is a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching by:
 - marking pupils' work to show them how to improve their work
 - providing higher attaining pupils with greater challenge
- Develop community cohesion by:
 - evaluating the impact of planned events and actions
 - providing pupils with opportunities to engage with children from different backgrounds

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Achievement is good and most pupils say they enjoy lessons and their time in school. This is evidenced in their positive attitudes towards the activities offered. Pupils particularly value the opportunity to use and apply their skills. For example, Year 4 pupils enthusiastically tackled problem-solving tasks employing strategies that had been very well explained by the teacher. They achieved success because of the clear articulation of the steps needed to answer the questions and the highly developed relationships that meant pupils felt comfortable to ask questions when uncertain of what to do next. The school works well to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by providing work that meets their learning needs, skills and understanding well. Consequently, these pupils make similarly good progress to their classmates.

Pupils develop a good understanding of safety and are aware of potential risks such as those found on the internet. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community through groups such as the school council and being PALs, (Playground Activity Leaders) who help resolve any playground problems. As a result, pupils say incidents of bullying are rare and if this occurs, they are very quickly resolved by staff. Pupils are very polite, mature, confident and cooperative and this is a result of good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their personal qualities, together with high quality team work and ability to work independently, prepares them well for the next stage of their education and future lives.

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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	2
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	2
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	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Strengths in teaching include clear planning and the effective use of whole-class teaching, collaborative working in small groups and independent learning opportunities. Questioning is used well and pupils are prepared to make a contribution to a lesson, knowing that their views will be welcomed, valued and listened to. Consequently, they answer questions enthusiastically and are not scared to get things wrong. The procedures for assessment are clear and the use of assessment information to plan future work is consistent across the school but there are occasions when the assessment does not ensure there is an accurate match between the difficulty of the task and the different levels of pupils' abilities. This has a particular impact on high attaining pupils who are not always challenged in lessons as there are limited chances to explain their ideas and strategies and tackle tasks that stretch them.

The curriculum and the range of experiences planned for different subjects are well balanced. The curriculum has been used effectively to ensure pupils' interest and to raise attainment in English and mathematics to above average and speed up progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. Mathematical skills of pupils have improved through the challenges they faced when working with pupils from local schools. The 'Young Writers' project resulted in high calibre writing which showed a secure grasp of features including character and plot development. Pupils enjoy the good range of additional activities provided by the school, such as basketball and stacking (seeing how quickly cups can be

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stacked) and gain much from the visitors to the school. ICT is used well to underpin pupils' work and record it in different ways. The teaching of Spanish adds a further positive dimension.

The good pastoral care and support is a significant feature of the school. Pupils are confident that there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Pupils are well looked after and the school is a safe and secure place. One parent commenting on their child says, 'She has come on massively...they understand her needs,' supports this view well. Those who find school difficult are supported effectively so that they are able to make the same good progress in their personal development as in their academic work because of a range of good-quality intervention programmes that focus on skills as well as knowledge.

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides good leadership with self-evaluation that is accurate and informed by careful monitoring of teaching and analysis of performance data. Subject leaders are fully involved in this process and have a rigorous focus on the learning and progress of pupils. As a result, the school is realising its ambitious plans for improvement and successfully tackling discrimination. Governors involve themselves closely in the work of the school. They are supportive but also understand the importance of holding the school to account for its work. They ensure that safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements. Partnerships with others are good, particularly in promoting pupils' social and emotional development. There are good links with parents and the school does much to encourage and support their involvement in their children's learning and well-being, during term time and holidays. Strong local links locally have been established and the school serving as a focal point for the village it serves through its community events. The school plays a significant part in the lives of the residents of a nearby care home.

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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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in all areas of learning because adults pay close attention to providing them with time to socialise, speak and listen to each other. Attainment on entry varies from year to year, but is generally at the level expected for this age group. The children's very positive behaviour and attitudes contribute well to their good progress and staying safe. Teaching is effective because good assessment information is collected and well used by staff. The curriculum offers an appropriate balance of adult-led activities and those that children choose for themselves and work at independently. There are close links with pre-school settings and with parents that ensure children settle into school quickly. High levels of care and support are provided to the children. They quickly learn to work independently, share and take turns. Well-planned indoor and outdoor learning experiences develop children's social skills well and the 'Bank' and 'Building Site' gives them a real opportunity to improve them at the same time as developing problem solving and number skills. However, there are limitations outside as there is no cover in poor weather. The school has plans underway to improve this to provide children greater continuous access to the outdoor area. The effective leader of the setting has accurately identified this as an area for development.

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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

All the parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire agree that they are happy with their child's experience at school, that they are informed about how well their child is doing and that the teaching is good. An overwhelming majority consider that the school is led and managed effectively and deals well with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection evidence confirms the positive responses which most parents and carers submitted about all aspects of the school's work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stambridge Primary 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 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 69 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	49	18	49	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	65	12	32	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	51	18	49	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	49	18	49	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	51	18	49	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	46	20	54	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	62	14	38	0	0	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)	18	49	15	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	46	20	54	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	32	23	62	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	43	20	54	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	49	17	46	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	57	16	43	0	0	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 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.



20 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stambridge Primary School, Rochford, SS4 2AP

You may remember I recently visited your school with another inspector and I am writing to thank you for talking to me about the school and what you do. I am writing to tell you what we found out and what you think of your school.

You go to a good school.

You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and behave well.

Your contributions to the school and local community are good and very much appreciated.

Your attendance is satisfactory.

Children do well in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Your progress in English and mathematics is good.

Some of you who find learning a bit easier are not always challenged enough.

You know a lot about keeping safe.

We have asked the school to do two things. Firstly, we have asked that the work always challenges you enough to make you think, particularly those of you who find work easy. We also want the school to make sure that marking helps you to improve your work. Secondly, we want you to understand about the lives of people in different parts of the United Kingdom. You can help by making sure that you do your best and keep concentrating in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Richard Blackmore

Lead inspector

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