

Stretham Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110645
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	378139
Inspection dates	8–9 December 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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Law
Headteacher	Andrew Robertson
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspection team observed one assembly and 12 lessons taught by seven teachers across all the classes. They held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, teaching staff, members of the governing body and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school development plan, safeguarding documents, school policies, school assessment information, pupils' work in their exercise books and displays. They analysed information from 68 parent and carer 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.

- What is the quality of provision for Reception children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and how quickly do staff establish a baseline of children's skills and abilities?
- How effective are the quality of teaching, planning and assessment, especially in English and mathematics, for all groups, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- What has been the impact of the headteacher and deputy headteacher in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision, in tackling weaknesses and assuring there is enough progress in all year groups?

Information about the school

Stretham is a smaller than average primary school set in a small village on the outskirts of Ely. It serves the local villages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Their needs include moderate learning difficulties as well as speech and language and emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Almost all pupils are White British and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has several accreditations including national Healthy Schools status and the Eco Schools Bronze award. There is a privately run pre-school setting in the school which has been inspected separately. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are relatively new to the school and there have been a number of staffing changes since the last inspection.

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

This school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have identified very accurately the school's weaknesses and introduced rigorous systems to monitor pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. They have set out a clear vision for the school's further development and all staff fully support and understand the necessity to improve the quality of teaching so that pupils will achieve more. The governing body is increasing its effectiveness and now understands how to challenge the school on its performance. Taken together, the school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

The school has a number of strengths because all staff are very committed to pupils' individual personal development and well-being. Pupils are cared for and supported well which shows clearly in their good behaviour and attitudes to learning. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those new to school with little or no English are particularly well-supported. Pupils work together exceptionally well in class and, through the buddy system, take care of each other around the school. They know so much about how to be healthy that they are teaching their parents and carers too! Relationships amongst adults and pupils are built on this high-quality care and support, resulting in a harmonious and fully inclusive school. Pupils say they feel safe and their parents and carers strongly agree, testament to the good systems in place for safeguarding. Pupils' safety is a priority. The vast majority of parents, carers and the pupils themselves are happy with what the school provides. Attendance has improved and is average because of the school's concerted efforts to follow up absences and remind parents and carers of their responsibilities.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills broadly in line with those for their age and achieve well by the end of the Reception Year. This good progress is not maintained in Key Stages 1 and 2. Most make satisfactory progress as they move through year groups and by the end of Year 6 attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory overall with a proportion that is good. The variation in the rate of progress and attainment from year-to-year is attributable to inconsistency in teaching and the quality of lesson planning, particularly in Key stage 2. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory but is better in some year groups than others. In some lessons insufficient attention is paid to planning learning activities which match all pupils' needs precisely. This slows down progress, especially in classes where there is a wide range of ability. There are good plans to strengthen the satisfactory curriculum by identifying more accurately the progression in skills and knowledge

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over each key stage. At present this is not fully in place in all subject areas.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher are ambitious and set high expectations for rapid improvement. This shows in the rigorous monitoring and accurate evaluation of teaching and learning. Challenging targets are set for all pupils and regular assessments are recorded on an effective tracking system. The school development plan is sharply focused on reading, writing and mathematics, the right priorities for improvement. This is apparent in pupils' well-presented written work and the better progress they are now making. More is being expected of subject leaders who monitor their own curriculum areas but it is too early to see the impact of this in pupils' increased progress.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - implementing the plans to focus on developing pupils' progression in skills and knowledge in all curriculum areas
 - enabling pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills more extensively in all curriculum areas.

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or better by:
 - helping teachers to plan more precisely learning activities that match pupils' needs, especially in classes with a wide range of ability
 - ensuring all lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and pupils do not spend too long listening to the teacher explaining tasks.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - strengthening the monitoring of all curriculum areas and teaching and learning by subject leaders
 - building on the governing body's work to hold leaders and managers fully to account for the progress and performance of pupils
 - establishing a baseline of children's skills and knowledge at the start of the term children enter the Reception class.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Evidence from observing lessons, work in pupils' books and teachers' assessments indicate that pupils are making satisfactory progress overall, but there is some variation amongst year groups. Progress is better by the end of Key Stage 2, compensating for under-achievement earlier in the key stage, but remains

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satisfactory overall. Last year’s results were broadly average for all groups at the end of Key Stage 2, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and showed the vast majority of pupils reached their targets. One small group of higher-attaining boys were the only group to make better than expected progress. Three absent pupils skewed results in mathematics although all but two pupils made the expected progress in English. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because tasks are broken down into simple steps and there are plenty of good quality resources to help them. The few pupils who are just beginning to learn English also make satisfactory progress and receive appropriate support.

Pupils are enthusiastic learners and make good progress when the pace of learning is brisk and they know what they are expected to complete by the end of the session. This was the case in a good mathematics lesson in Key Stage 2. Pupils applied their addition and subtraction skills to an arrangement of numbers to work out emerging patterns. They changed the numbers and successfully proved why they got the same result each time. In a good literacy lesson older pupils wrote interesting poems using their knowledge of rhyme and rhythm. They refined their work because they used whiteboards effectively to try out their ideas. In less successful lessons pupils of different abilities tackled the same work resulting in the less able struggling to understand what they were doing and the more able being insufficiently challenged.

Pupils listen well in lessons despite variable teaching quality and show good levels of respect for and understanding of other people’s points of view. They willingly accept responsibilities that contribute to the good of the school and wider community. They act very responsibly as monitors and work successfully as members of the school council. They have well-developed inter-personal skills and apply their literacy and numeracy skills to a satisfactory level in school events such as fund-raising and charity work. They have a good understanding of other cultures because the school invites in visitors to share different aspects of their cultures and celebrations with pupils.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

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	1

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 extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory but is sometimes inconsistent, ranging from good to satisfactory. Most lessons are well organised and pupils are managed successfully. They like coming to school and for the most part are attentive and very well-behaved. In good lessons teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to display learning intentions and inform pupils about how they can check their learning at the end of a session. Good questioning and checking pupils' knowledge from previous lessons are also features of good teaching. In lessons that are less effective pupils sit too long listening to the teacher or working on activities that have not been planned sufficiently well to address their needs. Marking is detailed and in most cases informs pupils of how well they are doing. Older pupils know their targets and can refer to them to check what they will be learning next. Teaching assistants are well-deployed to work with small groups. They provide effective support to pupils with additional needs and manage small groups well when they are withdrawn from class.

Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory and increasingly pupils are applying their skills to a range of topics which link subjects across the curriculum. Information and communication technology resources are much improved and pupils use computers skilfully to record their writing. Although curriculum planning links subjects together within topics, teachers are only beginning to track pupils' progress in the full range of subjects. Outdoor learning is a regular part of the school timetable engaging pupils' interest and increasing their understanding of ecological issues. They are justly proud of their gardening activities. This has resulted in a recent award. Various enrichment activities are planned during the year including French, drama, history and science. Pupils comment enthusiastically about residential trips, after-school clubs and visitors into school. Good pastoral care results in rapid identification of pupils' additional learning needs and appropriate learning support. Good links with the on-site, pre-school setting enable children to make a smooth transition into school. Pupils are supported equally well in their move to secondary schools. The school is a safe and welcoming environment.

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	3

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relevant, through partnerships	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has forged a team of committed staff who together have succeeded in developing a culture in which pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. However, regular observations and rigorous evaluations of pupils’ academic progress show that not enough teaching is consistently good enough to guarantee higher achievement. The senior leadership team is succeeding in raising teachers’ expectations of what pupils are capable of learning. They set demanding targets to raise attainment and increase rates of progress. This year’s tracking information shows that pupils are making more progress than previously and are on course to achieve their targets. Subject leaders have a more limited role in this procedure, especially in monitoring how well pupils achieve in all curriculum areas.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is increasing its understanding of how to assess whether or not pupils are doing as well as they should. It is more confident in the questions it needs to ask. Safeguarding policies and practice are good. A dedicated governor diligently oversees all aspects of keeping pupils safe. Training is up-to-date regarding child protection and arrangements for safer recruitment. The school is an inclusive community and regular checks of pupil progress show that there is no discrimination. All groups’ achievements are satisfactory and the latest monitoring information shows that progress is accelerating as teaching improves. The school has maintained good levels of community cohesion particularly regarding local involvement. Developments to increase links with national and global communities have progressed well and pupils’ understanding of other cultures continues to increase. They learn about national and international issues, such as poverty and climate change, through topics and their charity events. The school has links to a primary school in Africa. Good communication with parents and carers ensure that they have many opportunities to contribute to their children’s education.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and	2

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tackles discrimination	
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children play and learn in well-equipped accommodation with an attractive outdoor area. They demonstrate good levels of independence when they choose activities that interest them. They concentrate well when completing prepared tasks, for example their pictures of Christmas trees. They cooperate well with each other and know how to share equipment and take turns. They stick at tasks and become engrossed in what they are doing, for example when they used the interactive whiteboard to practise what they had learned in the numeracy session. Direct teaching is well-planned and children listen attentively in these sessions. They last long enough to reinforce learning but then stop so that children can practise in their own time and at their own level. Welfare arrangements are good and all necessary health and safety systems are in place. Children learn well-ordered routines which help them to settle quickly into school life.

The setting is well-led and managed and the necessary systems for assessing children’s progress are well established. Detailed evidence is collected and recorded for each child on a regular basis showing progress in all six areas of learning. At present a baseline of what children can do when they start in this class is not finalised until after the first half-term. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who enter school with little English are well catered for and are fully included in the group. Good communication with parents and carers contributes well to their children’s learning. Staff are appropriately qualified, including first-aid training, and children benefit from good levels of individual care and support.

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

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire was above average for a primary school. Their views were very positive. Almost all

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parents and carers agree that their children enjoy school and feel that their children are safe. Inspectors followed up in general terms some individual concerns raised by a small number of parents and carers. The main concerns were the extent to which the school is meeting their children's individual needs and how it takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that the school plans well for pupils' individual needs and these pupils achieve as well as their peers. The school deals with parental concerns and suggestions thoughtfully and acts on concerns responsibly.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stretham Community 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 68 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 146 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	66	22	32	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	57	26	38	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	20	29	44	65	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	23	34	36	53	2	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	30	44	34	50	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	25	37	39	57	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	32	43	63	1	1	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)	24	35	36	53	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	27	40	30	44	6	9	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	25	36	53	5	7	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	26	38	56	4	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	28	41	38	56	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	32	47	32	47	4	6	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



12 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stretham Community Primary School, Stretham, CB6 3JN

Thank you so much for helping us to inspect your school and making us feel welcome. Please thank your parents and carers for filling in their questionnaires and telling us what they thought about your school. Thank you to those children who also completed a questionnaire. They were very helpful and told us that most of you enjoy school, feel safe and learn how to keep healthy.

After we had watched your lessons and looked at your work we decided that your school is giving you a satisfactory education. Some things are good and some things need to be improved. Your headteacher and all the staff care about you and want to do everything they can to make sure you are successful. We thought you worked very well in class when you were solving problems or discussing your work. We were impressed with how much you knew about being healthy. A few pupils thought that behaviour was not always good enough; we hope that you will help those pupils who find it difficult to behave well, to improve. We enjoyed talking to the school council who are making sure that your views are passed on to the headteacher. Your new library area looks very attractive as a result of their input.

We have asked your headteacher, the staff and the governing body to continue to improve your reading, writing and mathematics. We have asked your teachers to try to make all your lessons good ones and to make sure that everyone understands the tasks they have to complete in lessons. We have asked your teachers to check how well you are doing in all your curriculum subjects not just in English and mathematics. This will help you as you move through the school and then on to your secondary schools. We hope you enjoy the rest of the year and you all can help by continuing to work as hard as you can.

Well done on your Christmas performances.

Yours sincerely

June Woolhouse
Lead inspector

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