

# Stow Heath Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	104324
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	385845
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Jacqueline Wordsworth HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	247
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	J Silvester-Hall (Vice Chair)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Vivienne Bunce
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 March 2011
<b>School address</b>	Hill Road Portobello Willenhall WV13 3TT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 558820
<b>Fax number</b>	01902 558821
<b>Email address</b>	stowheathjuniorschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	20–21 June 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	385845



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Jacqueline Wordsworth

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annette Szymaniak

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed eight teachers in 15 lessons; they observed guided reading sessions and listened to a number of pupils read. The team held meetings with members of staff, groups of pupils and three members of the governing body, including the existing Vice-Chair of Governors, the Chair of Governors for the shadow governing body of the new primary school, and a parent governor. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation relating to pupils' achievement and school management, including pupils' work, evaluations of teaching and learning, minutes of the governing body meetings and whole-school improvement planning. Inspectors took into account the questionnaires completed by school staff, pupils and 20 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

Stowheath Junior School is larger than most junior schools. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who have a statement of special educational needs or are catered for at 'school action plus' is also above average. They have a range of needs but mainly behaviour, social and emotional difficulties.

When it was last inspected the school was judged to require a notice to improve. A subsequent monitoring visit by HMI judged that the school was making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues that led to the category of concern. There have been several changes of staff and absences during the last year, and four acting headteachers. The school is due to close at the end of the summer 2012 and amalgamate with a local infant school. The current acting headteacher of the junior school will be the headteacher of the newly created primary school. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Concerted action since the previous inspection has improved the quality of provision, resulting in better progress as pupils move through the school. The school is not good because its leaders' monitoring and improvement planning systems have not ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good enough to promote good achievement and behaviour. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Writing and problem-solving skills in mathematics are not taught systematically across the school. Pupils' ability to apply mathematics in unfamiliar situations is limited by inconsistent practice in the teaching of opened-ended investigations.
- Strengths in teaching include clear explanations and positive relationships. However, the impact of teaching on learning in a significant proportion of lessons is no better than satisfactory because teachers do not take enough account of what the pupils already know and can do and, therefore, do not ensure that planned activities fully meet the needs of different ability groups.
- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. The number of fixed-term exclusions is too high, particularly for pupils with behaviour and emotional difficulties, as not all teachers utilise fully the recently introduced strategies to improve behaviour.
- The leadership of teaching and management of performance are satisfactory. Teachers have had appropriate opportunities to improve their practice through professional development opportunities and through a critical appraisal of their work by senior leaders. However, the monitoring of the quality of teaching does not always focus on the impact that teaching has on pupils' learning.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and improve pupils' learning and progress from satisfactory to consistently good by ensuring that:
  - the key concepts and skills that underpin effective writing, particularly those that develop pupils' independent writing, are taught systematically and securely throughout the school
  - investigative work in mathematics challenges pupils' understanding more, and in particular includes further opportunities for more-able pupils to investigate independently
  - teachers identify, within lessons, when pupils are ready for the next steps in their learning
  - the progress evident in the pupils' books translates into improved outcomes in the national tests at the end of Year 6 by enabling pupils to tackle Level 4 and Level 5 work more frequently
  - tasks build progressively on what pupils already know, and any repetition of work is kept to a minimum and used for consolidation purposes only.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement, by ensuring that:
  - all staff engage fully with the school's drive for further improvement
  - the judgements made about the quality of teaching take full account of pupils' learning and progress over time
  - specific, quantifiable and timed targets are added in all strategic planning, so that progress towards them is measurable and can be reported accurately.
  
- Raise the quality of behaviour from satisfactory to good by:
  - reviewing rates and patterns of fixed-period exclusions, including those for different groups of pupils and the impact of the school's work to follow up and support excluded pupils
  - utilising the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme fully in all classes.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Inspection evidence and the school's own data confirm that rates of progress have improved for most groups of pupils this year, particularly in mathematics, although attainment is still below average. Recent data indicate that progress for all groups of pupils is improving because school leaders have worked well to overcome a legacy of low expectation and underachievement. Current work in pupils' books across the school shows improved attainment, which is more in line with national expectations,

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particularly in English. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made satisfactory progress in reading and most pupils' reading skills are at the levels expected for their age. They are able to read a range of texts with suitable accuracy, enjoy books and offer opinions when talking about the plot or the characters. Most are able to read with expression and confidence and the more-able pupils are able to recognise and discuss different types of books and illustrate their comments by finding appropriate references.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. Better links with outside agencies ensure that extra help for individual pupils is increasingly available. Pupils with more complex difficulties, particularly those at 'school action plus' level, make at least satisfactory progress against their individual targets. They do not make such rapid progress towards age-related expectations because the related support provided varies across classes and year groups.

Pupils' learning in lessons is generally satisfactory. They sustain their concentration on the activities set and work well in groups and with adults, even when tasks set are mundane. Better use of partner work has been successful in improving writing. This approach was used well in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were encouraged to share their ideas with each other on how personification can be used in writing to add interest. This helped them to clarify their thoughts prior to writing. However, writing skills are not taught systematically across different classes and year groups, and pupils have too few opportunities to write at length or to use a range of more complex writing styles. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory overall but pupils are not confident with the use of technical vocabulary and do not have opportunities to conduct independent investigations in mathematics. Consequently, they are not able to use and apply their mathematics in unfamiliar situations or make connections for themselves.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teachers' improved subject knowledge and satisfactory planning, preparation and teaching of basic skills are raising their expectations of what pupils can achieve and as a consequence, pupils' attainment. Various topics in lessons provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they do and realise that others may have a different view or belief from their own. Where they have the opportunity to take responsibility, pupils do so well. All of these aspects of pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are satisfactory and show much improvement since the previous inspection.

In lessons, learning proceeds at an appropriate pace and staff give encouragement to all. Pupils know what they are expected to learn and are provided with targets. Good examples of teachers giving pupils regular feedback through their marking are to be found, providing clear explanations and ideas about how they can improve their work, but this is not the case in all classes. The best examples make it clear what pupils need to do to improve, with pupils given the opportunity to ask questions

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if they have not understood something. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to think for themselves, but not all activities allow pupils to apply their skills analytically to solve problems and manage their own work.

Notwithstanding these strengths there are shortcomings evident. Inconsistent teaching is a key factor preventing the school from moving pupils' achievement from satisfactory to good. Teachers do not always take account of what the pupils already know and can do and, therefore, do not always ensure that planned activities fully meet the needs of different ability groups. Teachers sometimes do not make best use of other adults to provide support for pupils who find learning more difficult, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as teachers occasionally give insufficient attention to checking the learning of this group. Long-term planning, especially for writing and mathematics, does not focus well enough on developing key skills or ensure that each unit of work places sufficient demands on pupils, particularly in providing opportunities for them to tackle Level 5 work on a more frequent basis. Guided reading, on the other hand, is more focused and provides appropriate challenge and includes a regular assessment of pupils' skills.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The provision of a mentor and access to play therapy enable specific pupils to learn about their feelings and how they can better control their emotions. All pupils understand and can explain the progressive system for sanctions but they are also very aware of the positive rewards used and show pleasure when they are praised for their work or behaviour. Pupils told inspectors that they respect their teachers and appreciate the support they receive, and that they are aware of the different types of bullying and know who to approach if it should occur. They have a sound understanding of how to keep safe and of the risks they face. Pupils know about internet safety and the dangers of social networking sites. The few parents or carers who responded to the questionnaire felt that their children were kept safe. They are aware of the few pupils who present challenging behaviour, with some commenting that the school does not manage behaviour well and that lessons are disrupted. Scrutiny of case studies and the school's monitoring data support the positive impact of newly introduced strategies such as SEAL and the rights and respect curriculum on improving and sustaining the now satisfactory behaviour over the past year. They are yet to have an impact on the high level of exclusions, particularly for those who have the most complex needs. Inspectors observed satisfactory behaviour in lessons and around the school. Attendance rates are broadly average despite a variety of strategies employed by the school to improve them.

### **Leadership and management**

The action points from the previous inspection have been addressed appropriately and the school has made satisfactory improvements in many aspects of its work. For example, a much-improved range of professional development opportunities, including through collaboration with a local teaching school, and the reintroduction of performance management for all staff have given rise to an improvement in the

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quality of teaching and learning. Although there is still some weaker teaching, the better teaching has resulted in an increased proportion of pupils who are on track to attain Level 4 plus in the national tests at the end of Year 6 compared with the 2011 results.

Collaboration with consultants from the local authority has helped senior leaders and middle managers to develop a better understanding of how to monitor provision within their areas of responsibility. These formal procedures and a programme of 'drop-in' lesson observations enable senior leaders to gain a satisfactory understanding of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Some leaders, however, particularly leaders of subjects, merely describe what has been done or is planned, without analysing clearly the expected or actual outcomes of their actions. Assessment data are plentiful and analysed in detail to identify levels of achievement, but are not routinely used by teachers to plan their lessons. Consequently, leaders are not making best use of the information gathered about the quality of teaching and the pupils' progress to plan strategically for improvements and to set challenging targets. As a result, school self-evaluation is mostly accurate, but sometimes overgenerous where it is not linked to the outcomes for pupils.

The drive for improvement in outcomes for pupils lies at the heart of the school's philosophy, and is articulated well in the school development plan. It is less clear how some ambitions will be translated into practical action. Some targets are not sharp enough. Many of the improvements to the quality of provision have been brought about recently and are not fully embedded. Therefore, although the school clearly demonstrates its satisfactory capacity to improve, there has been too little time for many of the changes that have been made to take full effect. Senior leaders acknowledge that they need to continue with a rigorous monitoring schedule in order to embed the positive changes to ethos and practice which have occurred over the past year.

The school fulfils its duty to promote equality and tackle discrimination to create a harmonious environment where pupils from a wide range of backgrounds work together and respect each other. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body provides appropriate support and challenge to the school. Safeguarding meets current government guidelines. The curriculum meets the needs and interests of pupils, and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development appropriately. The school celebrates diversity in faiths and cultures through the curriculum and through a range of other experiences, including visits to contrasting localities and residential experiences.

## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



22 June 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Stow Heath Junior School, Willenhall, WV13 3TT**

Thank you for being so friendly when we visited your school and for telling us your views, including through your questionnaires. We were pleased to see that some of you have trained as peer mentors. This is a real achievement and responsibility – well done!

You have really helped us. We think your school is a satisfactory school, which means it does some things well but also has some areas for improvement. These are the things that we liked most.

- You enjoy school, and you particularly liked going on the residential trip in Year 6 and the on day trip to Aberdovey.
- You know how to keep yourself safe on the internet and understand who to go to for help if you are worried or upset.

The school is working hard to make things even better for you. We have asked the adults in charge to make sure that:

- teachers always give you work that makes you think hard and helps you make faster progress and reach even higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics
- your teachers look at lots of different ways to help you behave really well in class and on the playground
- teachers who are involved in checking how well you are doing in class look more carefully at what you have learned, so they know exactly what to work on to help lessons improve.

We hope that you will all continue to enjoy coming to school and try your hardest so that you are successful in the future.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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