

Stalbridge Church of England Primary School

Duck Lane, Stalbridge, Dorset, DT10 2LP

Inspection dates 27–28 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Relationships between pupils, families and school staff are highly positive.
- Teaching is good. Work is well-matched to pupils' needs. Lessons are interesting and encourage pupils to develop independence, and pupils achieve well.
- Outstanding teaching for older pupils ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils are very keen to learn and their behaviour is outstanding. This is because staff care exceptionally well for all pupils and promote good manners and consideration for others very effectively.
- Pupils feel very safe at school and instances of bullying are rare. Any misbehaviour is dealt with thoroughly.
- School leaders plan carefully for each pupil enabling them to make good, and improving, progress.
- The school has improved since its previous inspection because leaders have sharply focused on ensuring that teachers make good use of assessment to inform teaching and learning.
- Strong leadership and management underpin the school's capacity to improve in the future.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A minority of teachers are not always challenged sufficiently to improve aspects of their teaching.
- Occasionally lesson introductions continue for too long, constraining the pace and challenge presented to the pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place over two days. Inspectors observed 17 lessons across the school, accompanied by school leaders for some of these observations. They also made shorter visits to some lessons and heard children read.
- Inspectors talked informally to parents and carers each day, as they brought children to school, and spoke with the school’s pupil council. Many children were also spoken to informally at break and lunchtimes as inspectors observed these daily activities.
- Inspectors met with the school governors and talked with school staff including senior and middle managers. They also attended breakfast club and two assemblies.
- The school’s own data about pupils’ progress were analysed. The team looked at pupils’ work from their current and previous classes, and teachers’ planning.
- Behaviour records and incidents of bullying were also checked closely. Safeguarding documents were examined as well as information on pupils’ attendance.
- A local authority representative was consulted. The views of 23 parents and carers given via the online questionnaire (Parent View) were also used to help plan the inspection. Inspectors received one letter from a parent, and two staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Louise Pearce, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Alexander Baxter

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is slightly smaller than the average-size primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- A lower than average proportion of pupils are supported by the pupil premium funding.
- The school runs its own breakfast club and after-school clubs.
- The proportion of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, those supported through school action and school action plus and those with statements, is smaller than average. These pupils' needs mainly include speech and language needs, and hearing impairment and physical disabilities.
- All pupils are taught in single year group classes, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are taught in a Reception class.
- A privately funded pre-school operates on the school site and also shares some of the school's facilities. As it is managed independently it was not part of this inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - sharing and using existing strengths evident in some parts of the school, for example to ensure more consistency in the pace and challenge of learning during whole-class lesson introductions
 - following up classroom observations with targeted action to extend staff skills more swiftly.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- First-hand observations of learning in lessons, samples of pupils' past work and national and school assessments show that pupils achieve well and make good progress across the school. This progress accelerates as children get older due to consistently challenging teaching which promotes independence and fosters excellent skills of concentration, handwriting and presentation.
- Consequently, speaking and listening, information and communication technology (ICT) and independent learning skills are significant strengths in upper Key Stage 2.
- Pupils from all groups, including those supported by pupil premium funding, make good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also achieve well in response to the well-targeted additional assistance they receive. High quality support leads to some outstanding gains for pupils with complex needs.
- All pupils make good progress in reading because of a consistent focus on teaching the sounds of letters and words (phonics) and because of good links with parents and carers, who support reading at home. As a result, by the time they leave, pupils are confident adventurous readers.
- Children start school with skills that match those normally expected for their age, and with personal and social skills often above that. During their Reception Year, children make good progress, but writing is an area of relative weakness for some pupils.
- Although progress is good across Years 1 and 2, at times pupils' progress in writing varies because of some inconsistency in teachers' and pupils' expectations of handwriting and presentation.
- Similarly, while some older pupils of higher ability are doing really well, in a few classes not all such pupils are making such rapid progress.
- Attainment is rising and is above that expected nationally by the end of Year 6. This is evident in the pupils' perceptive and well-expressed responses and their mature attitudes to learning observed in the Years 5 and 6 classes.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching across the school leads to high levels of enjoyment of learning and engagement from pupils. Relationships between pupils and staff are very respectful and productive with most teachers having high expectations of their classes.
- The quality of teachers' questioning skills is a particular strength and all teachers model high quality vocabulary and specific technical words suitable for the subjects they are teaching.
- In the very best lessons this leads to pupils producing extended, independent work of a very high quality. For example, in an English lesson older pupils worked quickly and quietly by themselves to produce a report. The teacher and teaching assistant carefully supported and extended pupils with the vocabulary they needed, but there was an expectation that pupils would work independently for a sustained period with quiet concentration.
- The teaching of reading is a consistent strength across the school. Reading sessions are very well planned and develop pupils' comprehension skills. There is some very good practice in the teaching of phonics, especially for younger children which is why pupils make good progress and do well.
- Teachers match work to pupils' needs well. In a lesson on mathematical shapes, separate groups of pupils had different tasks specifically chosen to challenge pupils according to their abilities. All the staff in the lesson used mathematical language very precisely and insisted that pupils did so too. In this way less able pupils heard and used the correct vocabulary for describing shapes, and thus progressed quickly.
- Occasionally, more-able pupils wait too long at the start of lessons listening to information that they already know and at times, in some mathematics lessons, formal methods for

- addition and subtraction are not always taught soon enough, constraining pupils' progress.
- Teachers mark work promptly and give clear guidance for how children can improve.
 - An impressive aspect of the school's work is the independent projects that pupils undertake as they get older. This is supported by good teaching in ICT and in lessons, which helps their research skills.
 - Respect and engagement in lessons are other notable features of the school, with pupils offering ideas and supporting one another. For example, in the popular Achievers' Assembly pupils take pleasure in each other's achievements.
 - Teaching assistants are used very successfully to support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The specialist assistance that pupils with very complex needs receive balances empathy with challenge and is particularly outstanding.
 - The Oasis Club that runs at lunchtime is another exemplary feature where pupils with a range of needs are skilfully supported to develop their social skills.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- All pupils behave with consideration and good manners. They try their best in lessons and show independence and resilience in their learning. Pupils help one another freely and enthusiastically. For example, in a Year 6 ICT lesson pupils swapped ideas and encouraged each other to do better. Pupils willingly undertake independent homework and further their own learning at home by researching French projects, which they share with their peers.
- Pupils' behaviour towards each other and towards staff is exemplary. They take pride in their school: 'I wouldn't change one thing about Stalbridge!' said a Year 3 child. Tolerance and respect are key features of the code of behaviour and are clearly upheld by all staff. Skilful management of behaviour for pupils who have extra needs is highly effective in promoting a calm, productive atmosphere.
- All governors, staff and pupils spoken to by the inspectors were clear that behaviour is a key strength, underpinning their enjoyment of school and determined efforts to learn in lessons.
- The school effectively complies with all safeguarding requirements. Bullying is rare and pupils feel very safe at school. Pupils and most parents and carers agree that when bullying does occur the school acts quickly and firmly. The school monitors pupils' behaviour very thoroughly and detailed records reflect rigour and effective action to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils were seen to be thoughtful and considerate, showing genuine empathy and support for each other. This was especially the case, for example, during break times and 'Wake and Shake' sessions at the start of the school day when older pupils acted as 'buddies' to support younger pupils and those new to the school.
- Attendance is above average, reflecting the pupils' enjoyment of school, the school's close links with parents and carers and the rigorous action it takes to promote good attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders strongly promote continuing improvement and have raised pupils' achievements, including the achievements of those receiving pupil premium support, since the previous inspection.
- There is high morale among the staff and their teamwork also contributes well to school improvement.
- The headteacher's promotion of pupils' personal and social education underpins the school's caring ethos and the shared determination to improve outcomes for all the pupils.
- The school's leaders and managers have developed a curriculum that is stimulating and enjoyable. There is a good range of after-school clubs and out-of-school experiences. The school's promotion of social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is exemplary, for example, parents and children commented on the successful 'Poetry Day'.
- Typically the arrangements for managing teachers' performance are effective in bringing about better lessons for pupils. However, senior leaders have not always moved as speedily

as they could to follow up classroom observations and improve teaching, for example developing the pace of learning in some lessons.

- Even so, self-evaluation is effective. The school's view of its own strengths and areas to develop is accurate and information gathered is used well to target priorities and to sustain a strong capacity to improve into the future. For example, improved use of assessment to target pupils' differing needs through additional support and more systematic teaching of the pupils' reading skills has quickened pupils' progress.
- Arrangements for keeping children safe are very good. Absences are followed up promptly and the school puts in extra support for children who miss schooling, sustaining their good progress.
- The school has very good partnerships with parents and carers. The curriculum is explained well to families enabling them to help their children effectively at home. The vast majority of parents and carers would recommend this school: 'My anxieties about my child starting school were quickly alleviated at the new parents' evening', said one parent.
- The local authority provides effective light touch leadership support for this good and improving school. The school's work in its local area, which is supported by the local authority, underpins the school's ability to secure equality of opportunity and achievement for all its pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - holds senior leaders to account, contributes well to decision making and is effective in supporting school improvement
 - fulfils its statutory requirements and ensures that the school budget is managed effectively and that pupil premium funding is spent appropriately.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113899
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	401396

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	197
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lavinia Hinks
Headteacher	Michael Allen
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 January 2010
Telephone number	01963 362487
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