

Stopsley Community Primary School

Hitchin Road, Luton, LU2 7UG

Inspection dates 27–28 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. Those currently in Year 6 are on course to attain above-average standards in English and well above in mathematics. Many of these pupils are making outstanding progress.
- Teaching is good. Lessons capture pupils' interest because work is closely matched to their needs and the stage they have reached.
- Pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. They feel safe and are proud of their school and of their achievements.
- The effective work of the headteacher and senior leaders has brought significant and rapid improvements in achievement, teaching and pupils' behaviour.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- For some lower attaining pupils, the basic skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar are not established sufficiently well. This slows down their progress in English.
- While pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 shows marked improvement, the proportion of pupils making more than the expected progress lags behind the national average.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed for teachers to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed parts of 16 lessons. The inspector was accompanied by the headteacher on all the lesson observations.
- Meetings were held with members of the interim executive board, the local authority, the headteacher and senior leadership team, pupils and parents.
- The inspector listened to pupils reading, looked at the work in pupils' books and discussed their work with pupils.
- Account was taken of the school's information about pupils' attainment and progress, its self-evaluation and plans for future improvements. The inspector also looked at a range of documents and policies concerning school management and keeping pupils safe.
- Consideration was given to parents' views expressed in a survey recently conducted by the school.

Inspection team

Godfrey Bancroft, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language are above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus and who have a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for additional government funding through the pupil premium (funding which supports the learning of those pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal, those in the care of the local authority and for some whose parents are deployed in the armed forces) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain the improvements in the progress of pupils in Years 1 and 2 so that it is consistently good.
- Accelerate the progress of lower attaining pupils in English so that it becomes good for all of them by focusing closely on improving their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Make full use of opportunities to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills by:
 - increasing the use of 'learning partners' in all subjects
 - carefully targeting questions so that pupils are challenged and given time to think and to plan their answers
 - creating more occasions when pupils can discuss their work and share their ideas.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children join the Reception classes their knowledge and skills are close to those expected for their age. However, their knowledge and understanding of the world is lower than expected and there are no areas of learning in which their knowledge and skills exceed the expected level. Children make good progress in the Reception classes and the majority join Year 1 with attainment that is above average in all areas of their learning.
- By the end of Year 2, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average. This follows steady improvement after several years when attainment was below average. The proportion of pupils making the progress expected of them is also rising, although the proportion exceeding the expected rate is lower than that found nationally.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy reading. Their ability to recognise the sounds made by letters and words is improving. Older pupils are also keen readers who enjoy talking about the books they have read.
- Following several years, prior to going into special measures, pupils did not do as well as they should and standards at the end of Year 6 were below average. Standards in English are now above average and standards in mathematics are well above average. The proportion of the pupils currently in Year 6 and making more than the expected progress is higher than found nationally. This is clearly evident from the work seen during lessons and in pupils' books, as well as from the school's records of pupils' attainment and progress. The significant improvements in mathematics are as a result of teachers focussing effectively on developing pupils' basic skills to add, subtract, multiply and divide.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who benefit from the pupil premium are all making at least the progress expected of them. Pupils from these groups in Years 5 and 6 are exceeding the progress expected of them. However, there are still some lower attaining pupils whose spelling, punctuation and grammar are not as good as they should be and this slows their progress in English.
- The pupil premium funding is helping those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals to increase their progress and to catch up with that of other groups.

The quality of teaching is good

- The effective work of school leaders has brought about significant improvements in teaching which are resulting in faster pupil progress and rising standards. The legacy of previously inadequate teaching has been totally removed. During the inspection, some outstanding teaching was seen, enabling pupils to thrive and make exceptional progress. Teaching in the Reception class also meets children's needs well.
- Teachers have high expectations. Pupils respond well, work hard and show good application to their learning. This is exemplified by the neat presentation of work seen in the books of many pupils.
- Teachers plan pupils' work thoroughly. A significant strength is the excellent match of work to

pupils' needs and abilities, particularly in mathematics. Even when pupils are already working in groups that are set by ability, teachers plan work precisely for four and often five sub-groups within the class. However, there are times in English when not enough attention is given to improving the spelling, punctuation and grammar of some lower attaining pupils.

- There are also times in some lessons when teachers do not capitalise fully on opportunities to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills. The use of 'learning partners' for pupils to discuss their work is often very effective, particularly so in English. However, this strategy is not used as much in some other subjects and opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to discuss and share their ideas. Similarly, questions are often targeted precisely to extend and challenge pupils' thinking but teachers do not always give pupils enough time to think and to plan and prepare their answers.
- Under the guidance of the teachers, teaching assistants provide good support for those pupils who have special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and those for whom the school receives the pupil premium. The needs of those supported through the pupil premium are often addressed precisely by providing good opportunities for them to learn in small groups and for them to have individually tailored sessions with a teaching assistant; for instance, when they receive help with their reading.
- Pupils' progress is assessed accurately and the information gained from assessments is used to match the next steps in learning precisely to pupils' needs. Pupils are very well informed about the levels they have reached, about their targets and about the steps to take to improve their work and progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted effectively during lessons. For example, there are good opportunities for pupils to make music, dance and appreciate stories and poetry. They also gain considerable insight and understanding of the customs and beliefs of others. During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 enjoyed a lesson, led by a teaching assistant, in which they learned about the Muslim faith's celebration of Eid. During the lesson, they danced and ate food that is part of the celebration.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. They are proud of their school and their achievements. They understand the school's system of sanctions and rewards. As one pupil said, 'We enjoy learning.' Pupils greatly appreciate the praise they receive for their efforts and achievements.
- Instances of inappropriate behaviour are rare. This was not always the case. Significant improvements have come about because staff manage and resolve such instances consistently and with understanding, which is much appreciated by pupils.
- Attendance is broadly average, but has also improved significantly since the last inspection. School leaders have worked effectively to raise parents' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and express their appreciation for the ways in which staff take care of them. Pupils are confident that they can turn to staff if they have any problems, be they personal or academic. They know that they will receive all the help they need. One pupil echoed the views of many when he said, 'The staff are always there for us and will always listen to us.'

- Pupils know how to stay safe. They recognise and understand bullying in its various guises. Pupils are well informed about the possibilities of bullying posed by the internet. They recognise racist bullying and know it is wrong to be unkind to those who, for whatever reason, are different or less fortunate. Pupils show great respect for each other and, especially, for those who are from other backgrounds and ethnic origins. They say that instances of bullying are rare and appreciate the way that staff involve them in resolving problems on such occasions.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leadership team provide highly effective management. They are committed to doing their best for all of the pupils. They ensure that all forms of discrimination are addressed and that all pupils are given every opportunity to thrive and achieve well.
- The drive and ambition of school leaders has brought about very marked improvements in pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching, behaviour and attendance. In just under a year, they have taken the school from one that required special measures to a school that is now good, and where pupils' attainment, by the time they leave, is above average in English and well above average in mathematics.
- No-one is complacent and there is strong evidence to show the trend of improvement will be sustained, with pupils in Year 5 also on course to attain above-average standards. Throughout the school's time in special measures, effective support was provided by the local authority and by the headteacher and staff from a partner school. Such is the confidence that improvements will be sustained that this has been reduced to light-touch support.
- Challenging targets are set for pupils' attainment and progress. These targets are a central part of the appraisal and performance management of all staff and are linked appropriately to the recently published *Teaching Standards*. Good opportunities for the continued professional development of all staff have resulted in significant improvements to the quality of teaching and to pupils' progress.
- Self-evaluation is accurate, with plans for future improvement closely linked to the targets for pupils' attainment and progress. School leaders frequently check on the quality of teaching and learning and the existing expertise within the school is shared to underpin continued improvement.
- The activities provided for pupils during and after the school day, and within the school and beyond, provide well for their personal and academic development. Learning activities for children in the Reception class are good. The majority of pupils are becoming confident and thoughtful learners. The promotion of basic skills in mathematics is proving to be particularly successful. Pupils enjoy participating in sport, dance, drama and musical events. During the inspection, pupils were preparing for the school's recorder concert.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils get along well and relate well to adults. They appreciate each other's needs, take responsibility willingly and are always ready to help each other. They possess good insights into other cultures and beliefs and have been inspired by opportunities to meet and speak with visitors to the area and school, such as the Duke of Kent and the Paralympian gold medallist, Jonnie Peacock.
- Communication with parents about their children's academic progress and personal development is good. The most recent survey of parents' views shows the majority are pleased with the quality of education provided for their children.

■ The governance of the school:

- Since the school went into special measures, governance has been provided by an interim executive board. The board has provided excellent support in helping the school to move forward. They are now preparing to reinstate a governing body. A comprehensive programme of training is planned for the new governing body. Board members are highly supportive and very knowledgeable about the school. They are involved fully in evaluating the quality of education, holding the school to account for the quality of its work and planning for continued improvements. They fully understand how to compare the school with the national picture in terms of pupils' achievements. The board ensures that the school meets requirements to safeguard pupils. They are also involved fully in the performance management of staff, including making sure that progressions in teachers pay are linked to performance and in checking that the *Teaching Standards* are adhered to. Great care is taken to ensure the school's budget is used wisely, included the funds provided by the pupil premium. The board scrutinises the use of this funding and is aware of its impact in improving the progress of those pupils who are entitled.

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	109553
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	399373

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	398
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Gill Bryan
Headteacher	Kim Hall
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2012
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