

Little Stoke Primary School

Little Stoke Lane, Bristol, BS34 6HY

Inspection dates 20–21 February 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Rates of progress are not consistently good enough across year groups, particularly in Year 3. Consequently, achievement requires improvement.
- Until recently, senior leaders did not track the progress pupils make closely enough to identify and tackle any underachievement.
- Teachers do not always make it clear in lessons what pupils are expected to learn and the steps needed to be successful; this slows pupils' progress.
- Teachers do not provide sufficient time for pupils to respond to the marking in books, and then make improvements to their work.
- Checks on the quality of teaching have not been sufficiently precise in order to identify weaker practice and support improvement.
- Middle leaders have not evaluated their work extensively enough to know how effective they have been in improving pupils' achievement.
- Governors have not challenged senior leaders strongly enough about why some pupils do not make better progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is taking a strong lead in driving change; he has taken decisive steps to tackle weaker teaching and is helping teachers to understand what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Teachers manage behaviour well so that it is good in lessons and around the school. Typically, pupils are polite, friendly and keen to learn.
- Improvements to the curriculum have provided more interesting learning activities for pupils and good opportunities for them to practise their writing skills.
- Pupils report that they feel very safe.
- Reading skills are taught effectively and encourage pupils to develop a love of books.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 12 lessons of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the governors, the headteacher, and the school’s senior staff. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 12 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as consulting informally with parents and carers before school.
- They observed the school’s work, and looked at a range of documents including the school’s improvement plans, information on pupils’ current progress, planning, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to special educational needs, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors heard pupils read, talked to them in lessons and evaluated samples of their work.

Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matthew Cottrell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding from the government for children in local authority care, those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The new headteacher took up his post in September 2012.
- The school is part of the local authority's Improving Schools Partnership.
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?

- Improve teaching so that it is typically at least good in all year groups, including Year 3, by:
 - ensuring teachers make their expectations clear to pupils and maintain a brisk pace in lessons
 - making sure teachers provide pupils with the steps that show them how to be successful in their learning
 - ensuring that teachers allow sufficient opportunities for pupils to respond to their marking and make the necessary improvements.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - evaluating the quality of teaching in terms of its impact on the progress pupils make
 - providing training and professional development for middle leaders in checking and evaluating their areas of responsibility
 - developing the governing body's understanding of national assessment information so that they can challenge the school more robustly.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because progress is not consistently good and attainment has fluctuated year on year at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Progress across year groups is too variable though generally it is better in mathematics than in other subjects. Progress in Years 2, 4 and 6 is strong with the weakest progress in Year 3. Leaders are taking action to address this through improving the quality of teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress.
- In 2012, attainment at the end of Year 6 rose in both English and mathematics, especially at the higher levels, and was broadly average. Although progress for these pupils was good in mathematics, not enough made good progress in English from their starting points.
- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. From relatively low starting points pupils make good gains in their learning because the adults develop their personal skills well and teach reading and writing skills systematically.
- The introduction of a more robust system for tracking pupils' progress is ensuring that any pupil whose progress slows is identified quickly and provided with appropriate support.
- The school seeks to ensure that all pupils are given an equal opportunity to succeed. The pupils supported by the pupil premium are benefiting from additional support in both their academic and their personal development. Average points scores show that this group of pupils attain as well as their peers in both English and mathematics and that their progress overall is good.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make progress in line with their classmates at the school.
- Reading skills are developing well in both key stages. The school was well above the national average in the recent Year 1 Phonic Screening Check. Phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is taught systematically and effectively. The recent improvements to the reading materials available to older pupils are promoting a love of books across a range of new authors.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement as pupils' progress is inconsistent across the school, especially in Year 3. Often teachers do not make their expectations of the learning explicit and fail to give pupils the steps they need to be successful. Decisive action to address the weaker teaching has been started but has not yet had sufficient time to raise the quality of teaching or secure accelerated achievement for most pupils.
- Where teaching is good, such as in Year 2 and some older classes, the pace of learning is brisk because pupils are clear about what they need to accomplish.
- Teachers write helpful comments when marking, particularly in writing. However, teachers do not always allow sufficient time for pupils to respond to their comments and this lessens the impact of their marking and hinders progress.
- The improved system for tracking the progress of pupils is enabling teachers to use assessment information more precisely. They are increasingly planning learning activities that match pupils' needs and abilities. This means that pupils find the tasks more interesting and progress rises.
- In the most effective lessons, teachers provide opportunities to extend pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding. In one strong lesson, Years 5 and 6 pupils engaged in a high level discussion about the quality of each other's writing. As a result of the clear guidance they received on what constituted a successful piece of writing, they were able to make astute comments to help each other improve.
- Good support from the literacy leader has helped teachers to improve the way they teach writing so that activities capture pupils' imagination and inspire them to write in a range of styles across different subjects. This is helping to accelerate progress in writing.
- The pupil premium and the allocation of funds for special educational needs have been used to

provide small-group teaching that focuses on closing the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teaching assistants give effective support to those individual pupils with more specific needs, often in their social and emotional development. As a result, these pupils are able to make faster progress than their peers.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Typically pupils behave well in and around the school; they are polite, friendly and are very caring of each other. They pay good attention in lessons and are keen to learn. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because occasionally pupils lose concentration when the teaching is not brisk enough.
- Pupils, their parents, carers and the staff are positive about the standards of behaviour. Pupils report that bullying is rare although they are aware of the forms this can take such as cyber-bullying and racist name-calling.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school because the adults put children 'before anything or anyone else'. Parents and carers agree that the school looks after pupils well with regard to both their physical and emotional well-being.
- Teachers manage behaviour well with a consistent system that is understood clearly by pupils. Effective relationships create a productive environment for learning. Initiatives such as Year 6 pupils reading with less confident younger readers is helping to promote a spirit of good cooperation.
- Attendance and punctuality have shown a termly improvement since the school strengthened its policy last year so that attendance is currently above average and punctuality is good. Absence has been reduced as the school has taken firm steps to eradicate family holidays in term time.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Checks carried out by leaders on the quality of teaching have not been precise enough in identifying and addressing weaker teaching. Consequently, the quality of teaching across the school is too variable. The recently appointed headteacher and his leadership team have initiated steps to improve teaching and raise pupils' rates of progress, including in Year 3, but these have only just started to be successful.
- Limited checks have been carried out by middle leaders on the effectiveness of their areas of responsibility. As a result, they have not had sufficient information with which to assess how effective they have been in raising achievement. Until recently, they were not involved in helping teachers to make improvements to their practice.
- The headteacher is inspiring the staff, governors, and pupils so that there is a strong team spirit, increasing expectations and a determination to improve. Following a robust review as part of the Improving Schools Partnership, thorough improvement plans are in place that are clearly focused on the school's priorities and have the capacity to bring about the required changes.
- The headteacher has strengthened considerably the management of teachers' performance, which is linked to the national Teachers' Standards. Teachers are not rewarded unless they are successful in helping their pupils to make at least good progress and have a wider impact on the work of the school. The system for tracking pupils' progress means that teachers are being held to account more robustly.
- Improvements to the curriculum are providing more interesting experiences for pupils that enrich their learning and widen their horizons. These are contributing well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Writing opportunities are woven into other subjects very successfully.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils are met.
- **The governance of the school:**

Governors have not been sufficiently involved in checking the work of the school to enable them to challenge senior leaders about why pupils' progress is not yet good and why teaching requires improvement. The quality of the information they received in the past has not helped them to gain an accurate view of the school's performance, particularly in relation to other schools nationally. However, this has much improved recently and the headteacher's reports now include regular and comprehensive updates on pupils' progress. Governors have a clear understanding of the new arrangements to manage teachers' performance and how these link to pay progression. They have ambition for the school and appreciate the help from the local authority in developing their understanding and skills so that they are becoming more effective in their role. Financial management is secure and governors know the pupil premium has been used effectively to support pupils both academically and in their personal development.

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	131699
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	402498

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	154
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Newby
Headteacher	Scott Howes
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 February 2010
Telephone number	01454 866522
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Email address	Scott.Howes@sglos.gov.uk

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