

Stenson Fields Primary Community School

Heather Close, Stenson Fields, Derby, DE24 3BW

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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' behaviour and their understanding of how to keep safe is outstanding. The school provides rich and varied sporting and cultural activities that underpin pupils' personal development.
- Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers know pupils well and use questioning very effectively in lessons to develop pupils' understanding. Teaching assistants provide good support in and out of lessons and this ensures pupils, with a range of needs, make good or better progress.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and get a very good start to their time in school in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They arrive with skills that are below those typical for their age and make good and sometimes outstanding progress owing to quality teaching by all staff.
- All other pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- Leadership and management across the school are good. The headteacher provides determined and inspirational leadership. She is well supported by the senior leadership team and other staff. There is a sharp focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement.
- The governing body has enthusiastically embraced its responsibilities. It provides well-informed challenge and good strategic direction.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently outstanding because marking is not always used well enough to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics.
- Pupils do not get enough opportunities to develop their real-life problem solving skills in mathematics

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons, of which seven were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors observed groups of pupils working with teaching assistants and specifically listened to Year 2 pupils read, and other year groups in lessons.
- Inspectors talked to a range of pupils about their work and play in school.
- Meetings were held with governors as well as teaching staff, including senior and subject leaders. A discussion was held with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 36 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) when planning the inspection. They also talked informally to parents and carers as they arrived at school with their children. They also considered 18 staff questionnaires.
- Inspectors observed the overall work of the school and looked at a number of documents including the school's data about pupils' current progress. They also studied documents relating to safeguarding, governance, behaviour and attendance.
- They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' achievement, documents relating to safeguarding and staff training, minutes of the governing body and other monitoring groups, and those relating to the performance management of staff. An inspector also scrutinised the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning.

Inspection team

David Edwards, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Thelma McIntosh-Clark	Additional Inspector
Neil Taylor	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an above average-sized primary school.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after and children of service families.
- A below average proportion of pupils are supported through school action. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school population consists of around 50% of pupils from a White-British background. The remainder are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds, with Indian pupils making up the largest proportion of this group.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in a Reception class. Pupils are taught in mixed age classes throughout Key Stage 1 and 2
- The school has recently appointed a new deputy headteacher who is due to take up post in September 2013.
- The school has before-and after-school care not managed by the governing body and this is subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in lessons to raise pupils' achievement to well above average in mathematics and English by:
 - creating more opportunities in mathematics for pupils to develop their real-life problem solving skills
 - ensuring that the most able always have opportunities to extend their learning in lessons
 - give pupils learning prompts that are consistent with their level of ability, to help them to accurately evaluate the quality of their own work and that of their class mates
 - consistently ensure that pupils are able to give good quality responses to teachers' comments about the work in their books
 - ensure that the quality of marking in mathematics is as good as that in English, so that pupils are always clear about what is good about their work and how they can improve it.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well owing to good and sometimes outstanding teaching. The school sets challenging targets for itself. It uses progress meetings about pupils to ensure it identifies pupils who are not making the progress expected of them. This aids teachers' planning so that they can provide additional help and support to accelerate pupil progress where needed
- Children enter the Reception class with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding which are below those expected, with often weak communication, language and literacy skills in particular. They make good and sometimes outstanding progress during their first year in the school and enter Year 1 with attainment that is broadly average.
- Attainment in Key Stage 1 had traditionally been above average, but dipped markedly in 2012, particularly in writing and mathematics. The end of year teacher assessments for 2013 show that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is now above average again. The school's accurate checks on pupils' achievement at Key Stage 2 show that they have made good progress. The provisional Year 6 test results for 2013 show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above those expected for their age.
- Standards in reading are above average at both key stages, because the school teaches reading and phonics (sounds that letters make) in dedicated daily sessions and pupils quickly become fluent readers. Pupils in the Year 1 phonics check have achieved above national expectations in 2013. Almost all pupils are eager, confident readers. They are keen to talk about the books they are reading, their preferred style of book and favourite authors. Pupils read well for their age. They read with good expression and obvious enjoyment.
- Progress in mathematics has accelerated because teaching in the subject is improving. Teachers' concentration on mental calculation skills has led to a rise in standards in the subject. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to real-life problem solving, to accelerate progress further.
- Pupils entitled to the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, make good and sometimes outstanding progress. The school supports these pupils well through dedicated teaching and additional help in class. They reach standards above those that similar pupils achieve nationally. Their attainment is around one term behind other pupils in the school in English and mathematics.
- Because their progress is carefully tracked and their learning needs are met well, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Teaching assistants provide good support to advance their learning.
- Pupils who enter the school speaking English as an additional language have their needs quickly assessed. They receive good support in developing their spoken and written language, particularly from bilingual assistants, so that they make the same good progress as their classmates.
- The school creates a welcoming and supportive climate for learning, which helps pupils to thrive and adds to their good spirit, moral, social and cultural development.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers are very good at questioning and testing pupils' knowledge and understanding. They also provide stimulating and interesting activities. Consequently, teaching is good and some is outstanding. Most provide stimulating activities and get pupils to use their skills in one subject in other areas of learning, particularly in English. However, not enough opportunities are created for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills to solving real-life problems.
- Teachers plan lessons which effectively meet the needs of learners in the mixed age classes.
- Where lessons move at a very brisk pace and time is used well, pupils make outstanding progress in their learning. In a mixed year 3 and 4 class for mathematics lesson for example, the teacher enabled pupils to work extremely well independently when reading scales and calculating liquid capacity. The work was engaging and pitched at the right level of challenge for all pupils so they made rapid gains in their learning.
- In regular reading and writing sessions, pupils usually make good and sometimes outstanding progress, in the best lessons. This is because the teacher ensures that the more-able pupils are sufficiently challenged with activities that meet their needs. In these sessions, the teacher is very effective at ensuring all pupils are highly involved. The more-able pupils are further challenged by work that extends their thinking. However there are still some lessons, where the most-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged.
- Teachers' marking in English is generally of a high quality. Pupils have regular opportunities to respond to teachers' detailed marking and improve their work. As a result writing in particular is more ambitious. However, in some classes pupils are not being given differentiated learning prompts to help them to more successfully check the quality of their work. The quality of marking in mathematics is not as detailed or as helpful to pupils to accelerate their progress in the subject. Pupils know their targets in reading, writing and mathematics and how they need to improve in order to meet them.
- Pupils work very well together and readily cooperate in order to complete tasks and solve problems. They greatly enjoy being able to discuss their ideas and solutions with one another. In a good English lesson pupils were practising how to write 'flashbacks' in order to improve their writing, to make it more interesting to the reader. Pupils talk about their work with great enthusiasm.
- Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to all lessons, whether it be supporting pupils in lessons or providing additional support on a one-to-one basis. This valuable support ensures that pupils' needs are well met so they make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils behave exceptionally well in this cohesive and well-ordered school. They work and play harmoniously and their enjoyment of school is very evident. Relationships are strong and everyone is valued as an individual. As parents and pupils commented to an inspector, 'This school is like one big happy family'. Pupils are eager to talk about their work and have positive attitudes to learning. Their exemplary behaviour in lessons makes a strong contribution to their learning.

- Pupils are very keen to come to school and learn. They are highly involved and interested both in school and during out-of-school activities. The school has very good systems in place to support pupils' attendance and punctuality. Consequently, attendance is above average.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and secure. They say that bullying is rare but that should it occur they are confident about reporting it and equally confident that problems would be resolved. There are no recorded incidents of bullying and there have been no exclusions of any kind in the recent past.
- Year 6 pupils say that they feel confident and well prepared to move on to their next schools. Pupils know about staying safe online and about the potential dangers of mobile phones and social networks. They spoke positively about e-safety sessions in school and said that their parents and carers had benefited from the separate parent workshops.
- Conflict at playtimes is rare, but if it does occur, the skilled pupil peer mediators help to resolve issues. One pupil said, 'They give good advice to help us to sort our own problems'.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural experiences are wide and varied. Consequently, pupils have a very good appreciation of other cultures. They also have a very good understanding of right and wrong and relate well to each other, including those pupils with very specific needs. They collaborate very well both in and out of lessons and support each other's learning and play well.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management across the school are good at all levels. The headteacher provides quietly determined and inspirational leadership. She is well supported by the senior leadership team and other key members of staff. Throughout the school there is an eagerness to improve, openness of mind and a willingness to act decisively on constructive feedback in order to improve outcomes for pupils. There is a particularly sharp focus on improving teaching through a performance management system which focuses on improving outcomes for pupils and on targeted training for teachers.
- The school's evaluations of how well it is doing are clear and accurate, resulting in effective and detailed improvement planning with rigorous and regular monitoring and evaluation activities so that the school can be held to account for how well it is doing.
- Many examples of good quality writing are on display. This reflects the schools' successful efforts to raise standards in the subject. Pupil's excellent art work has been recognised by the achievement of the 'Artsmark gold' award. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development
- The way the school organises the subjects that pupils study provides varied and sometimes rich opportunities for pupils to learn and explore their understanding of the world. Topic work provides opportunities to use skills learned in one subject to be used in other areas of learning. All pupils have an opportunity to learn Spanish and the 'themed days' educational visits, for example to Kingswood outdoor activity centre, and visitors to school, make a strong contribution to personal development and the acquisition of important life skills.
- The local authority perceives this to be a good school. As such, it has adopted a 'light touch' approach to support. This mainly consists of confirming the school's judgements and providing governor training.

- The school gives a high priority to safeguarding pupils. Policy and practice fully meet all statutory requirements. The school cares particularly well for those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Events, such as the parent assemblies and concerts enable all pupils to enjoy experiences alongside their parents. Parents were also very positive about their children’s experiences at school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school very well. They have a wide range of skills to support the school in developing further and are also well trained in all areas of their responsibilities. They have a very good understanding of the school’s and national data and are aware that pupils’ attainment by the end of Year 6 needs to be consistently well-above average if the school is to become outstanding. Governors regularly visit the school and meet with subject leaders to monitor and evaluate pupil progress. They manage the school’s finances well and are very knowledgeable about how the pupil premium funding has been spent and how those pupils known to be eligible for such support have improved their attainment and rates of progress in English and mathematics. Governors are familiar with the school’s performance management procedures. They know how teachers are rewarded for their responsibilities, in and out of the classroom, and are keen to ensure that teachers are held to account for pupils’ progress. They know how the school tackles any underperformance.

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	112781
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	413031

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	295
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Foster
Headteacher	Shirley Smith
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2008
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