

# Stretham Community Primary School

Wood Lane, Stretham, Ely, CB6 3JN

**Inspection dates** 10–11 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Pupils have not all made as much progress as they should have done in recent years. Although progress has been good in some year groups, this has not been consistent.
- At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils generally reach higher standards in reading and mathematics than in writing.
- Teaching has not enabled all pupils to make rapid progress throughout their time in the school and a small amount still requires improvement.
- On occasions, teachers do not match work closely enough to the needs of different pupils so that some make more progress than others.
- The school does not have a clear system for checking on the effectiveness of support programmes that are funded through the pupil premium.
- While senior leaders are focusing on the right priorities to raise achievement and improve teaching, some of their work is at an early stage of development.
- Governors are knowledgeable about many aspects of the school's work but they are not fully informed about how to interpret data in order to judge the school's effectiveness.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children do well in the Reception class and move up to Year 1 with attainment that is generally above expectations for their age.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were above average in 2012 and many pupils in the current Year 6 are working at above average levels in English and mathematics.
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection and there is now much that is good. Teaching in Year 6 is outstanding.
- Pupils behave well, have good attitudes to learning and feel safe in school.
- There is now a strong focus on increasing the rate of school improvement, and staff are enthusiastic and motivated.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited 10 lessons, seven jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. She observed an assembly and sampled pupils' work in class.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body and with a group of pupils. A telephone discussion took place with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 40 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and analysed questionnaires completed by 16 members of staff.
- The inspector looked at the school's work and at documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, its development plan, and information about pupils' attainment and progress. She also looked at records relating to aspects of behaviour and safeguarding, and at teachers' planning.

## Inspection team

Margaret Goodchild, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding (additional government funding, in this case, for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- There have been a number of staffing changes since the previous inspection. The deputy headteacher took up post in September 2013 and an existing teacher became a member of the senior leadership team at the same time.

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

- Increase the amount of teaching that is at least good by making sure that teachers match work throughout their lessons to the needs of all groups of pupils in the class.
- Raise standards and increase the rate at which pupils make progress at Key Stages 1 and 2, especially in writing, by:
  - developing and extending opportunities for pupils to write at length in literacy, across subjects and independently
  - involving pupils more fully in setting their own targets for improvement in writing
  - making sure that tasks and approaches in lessons are always matched to the next steps in progress for pupils who find learning difficult.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - developing the skills of the new senior leadership team and those of subject leaders
  - putting in place the school's planned system for teachers to observe learning in each other's classrooms to spread best practice
  - measuring the effect of support programmes on the progress of pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding and adjusting these where necessary
  - making sure that governors are fully trained in how to interpret and use data to judge the school's effectiveness.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- The good progress that children make in the Reception class has not been built on consistently at Key Stages 1 and 2 in recent years. This is because pupils' progress in different year groups and subjects has varied, and achievement has been better in reading and mathematics than in writing.
- Children join the Reception class with skills that are below those typically found for their age and generally move up to Year 1 with attainment that is above national expectations. Despite the good start that children make, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have remained broadly average over a number of years. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment rose from average in 2011 to above average in 2012 but dropped to broadly average again in 2013.
- There were too few pupils eligible for the pupil premium in 2012 and 2013 for their attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 to be compared with that of their classmates without identifying individuals. These pupils generally make similar overall progress to the rest of the pupils but the school is not yet closely tracking the effect support programmes have on the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates in many lessons, but at times teachers do not match tasks closely enough to the needs of different groups of pupils. In particular, the progress of pupils who find learning difficult sometimes slows as a result.
- While pupils' progress in lessons still occasionally requires improvement, staff changes and improvements in teaching mean that pupils are now making much better progress than they were. The school's own data and pupils' work show that progress is now good at Key Stage 1 and in most lessons at Key Stage 2.
- As a result of outstanding teaching in Year 6, the oldest pupils are making exceptionally good progress in English and mathematics. Many pupils currently in Year 6 are working at above average levels for their age. The school predicts that results at the end of this academic year should show distinct improvement on those in 2013.
- More-able pupils generally do well and the school has met with a good level of success in the percentage of pupils reaching higher levels, especially at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils did well at higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics in 2012.
- Throughout the school, pupils' positive attitudes to learning make a good contribution to their progress. The school is working effectively to make sure that all pupils have equal opportunities and that their learning is not affected by discrimination of any kind. Pupils of minority ethnic heritage make similar progress to their classmates.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because over time it has not enabled pupils to make as much progress as they could have done, especially in writing.
- There are still a few lessons where teaching requires improvement as teachers do not take pupils' previous learning into account well enough when planning activities. Work is, therefore,

at times too difficult for some pupils or too easy for others. Although teachers plan different activities for different groups of pupils, there is not always enough difference in the work set. While teaching assistants often provide good support for pupils who need additional help, explaining tasks and breaking them down into smaller steps, work set for the class is sometimes too difficult for these pupils and so their progress slows.

- Pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 have targets in the front of their books and they are increasingly involved in evaluating their own progress but they do not yet contribute fully to identifying their own targets for improvement in writing. In some classes, teachers' marking of pupils' work keeps them exceptionally well informed about how well they are doing and what they could do to improve. The school is already working to make sure that all marking is of the same high quality.
- There has been good improvement in teaching since the previous inspection and pupils' books as well as lessons observed show that teaching is now frequently good. It is too soon for recent improvements in teaching to be reflected in the school's results at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 but good teaching is enabling pupils to make faster progress than they did.
- The school has thorough systems for checking what children are able to do when they join the Reception class and involves parents well in this process. Staff keep careful records of children's attainment and progress as they move through the Reception Year and a good variety of activities promotes children's development in the different areas of learning. The learning journals of children who completed the Reception Year in July 2013 show that the teacher's expectations were high and they had particularly good opportunities to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy.
- Where teaching is outstanding in Year 6, the teacher's explanations are exceptionally clear and probing questions push pupils to think deeply in solving problems for themselves. In both English and mathematics, the teacher empowers pupils by giving them plenty of opportunity to make decisions for themselves and teaches them how to learn. Teaching is sophisticated and tasks provide pupils with many different layers of experience and understanding.
- Throughout the school, teachers do their best to make lessons interesting for pupils and they instil in them an enjoyment of learning. Pupils say that their teachers are 'really kind' and that lessons are 'fun'. This helps to develop their good attitudes to learning.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils are happy at school and say that it is a warm and welcoming place. They feel valued, and relationships between pupils and with their teachers are encouraging and supportive. Parents and carers who expressed their views praised the friendly family atmosphere and the way that pupils, parents and carers alike are made to feel that they are important.
- At this early stage in the school year, children in the Reception class have quickly settled in and are already familiar with the daily routines. They are learning to play together harmoniously, to take turns and to concentrate well.
- Throughout the school, pupils have good attitudes to learning and eagerly contribute their ideas in class. They nearly always concentrate well in lessons and try hard with their work. Where teaching is outstanding, lessons are a hive of activity and pupils show a real thirst for knowledge.

- Teachers are skilled in managing pupils' behaviour and the school is calm and orderly. Lessons are only occasionally disturbed by low-level disruption and pupils are nearly always quick to respond to reminders from their teachers about how to behave. Pupils' comments, parents' and carers' views, and the school's records show that behaviour is typically good.
- Pupils have a good awareness of the various forms bullying can take, including cyber-bullying. Records show that there have been very few instances of bullying and pupils feel confident that these are dealt with effectively.
- Pupils feel safe at school and know how to keep themselves safe. Parents who expressed their views feel confident that the school keeps their children safe.
- Pupils have good opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and to develop leadership skills through taking responsibility for jobs around the school. Older pupils act as 'buddies', to support younger ones.
- The rate of attendance shows year-on-year improvement and is now broadly average.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- There have been a number of staff changes since the last inspection and the current senior leadership team is only recently formed. There have been improvements this term in the way the headteacher and senior leaders work to drive improvement, but it is too soon for this to have had a clear impact on pupils' achievement.
- The school's focus since the previous inspection has been mainly on improving teaching in English and mathematics. Leadership in these subjects has begun to improve but the role of subject leaders is, otherwise, at a fairly early stage of development.
- The school has produced a very clear plan of action about how to raise pupils' achievement and it collects a good deal of data. Staff meet regularly with senior leaders to discuss the progress of individual pupils, and joint lesson observations with the headteacher showed that his judgements about teaching are mostly accurate.
- Senior leaders have recently introduced a more thorough method for checking the quality of teaching. This has already begun to provide teachers with good quality feedback about how to improve their teaching. Senior leaders are providing clear guidance to teachers where teaching requires improvement and newly qualified teachers receive good support. The plan for teachers to observe learning in each other's classrooms is a good way of sharing the outstanding teaching already evident in the school.
- Subjects and topics are generally matched well to pupils' interests and learning needs. There are examples of pupils strengthening their skills in literacy and numeracy through work in other subject areas. The school has, rightly, identified the need to provide pupils with more opportunities to write at length in literacy, across subjects and independently.
- A variety of special events and activities makes learning enjoyable and contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils particularly enjoy the trips that bring their learning to life and talked enthusiastically about a visit to a museum as part of their topic on Ancient Egypt. They are even more excited about the adventure activities planned for a three-day residential trip in the near future. The school has good links with the local community which help to promote pupils' learning and personal development.

- The school has clear plans for spending its sports funding and evaluating the effectiveness of its decisions. It intends to increase opportunities for pupils to take part in competitions with other schools, provide additional training for teachers to improve the quality of physical education teaching and to appoint specialist teachers to run after-school sports clubs. As well as buying additional equipment to support physical activities, money will be spent on resources to promote healthy living.
  
- The local authority has provided the school with an appropriate level of support since the previous inspection and has a realistic view of its overall effectiveness. The authority has provided help particularly with leadership and governance, and senior leaders are currently receiving training on how to move the school's effectiveness to good.
  
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are generally well informed about the school's work, ask challenging questions of senior leaders and are ambitious for the school to improve. They have been involved with the headteacher in tackling past underperformance and are clear about how pay increases for teachers are linked to the effect they have on pupils' progress. Governance has improved since the previous inspection, including in the way individual governors visit the school and collect information for themselves. This means that they now have a more detailed knowledge of the school's work. Some governors have been trained in how to interpret data but members are not fully aware of how to use data to judge the school's overall effectiveness, particularly in relation to gauging progress from the end of one key stage to the next. Governors are aware of how pupil premium funding is spent, but have not asked for information about its effect on pupils' achievement. The governing body makes sure that national requirements are met, including for the safeguarding of pupils.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110645
<b>Local authority</b>	Cambridgeshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	425199

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	150
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alice Travis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Robertson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 December 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01353 649271
<b>Fax number</b>	01353 648215
<b>Email address</b>	office@stretham.cambs.sch.uk

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