



# South Stanley Junior School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114031  
**Local Authority** Durham  
**Inspection number** 289784  
**Inspection dates** 16–17 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Andrew Scott

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Tyne Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		South Stanley, Stanley
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11		County Durham, DH9 6PZ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01207 232059
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	184	<b>Fax number</b>	01207 231568
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Carol Jackson (acting)
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Alan Black
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 7–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 16–17 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 289784
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is an average-sized junior school in an urban area of some deprivation. The pupil population is fairly static and virtually all are from White British families. There are appreciably more boys than girls. About a third of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

South Stanley Junior School is a satisfactory school with some good features. Pupils have tended to enter school with below average skills and knowledge, but they are increasingly arriving with average attainment. By Year 6, their attainment is still below average in English, mathematics and science, but not far below. The school knows that there are weaknesses in pupils' speaking, listening, writing and independent learning skills in mathematics and science, and so has recently tightened up its assessment systems. This action has helped improve pupils' achievement over the past year and it is now satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Their behaviour is essentially good and they take good care of one another. They appreciate the benefits of a healthy diet and exercise and respond well to the opportunities provided. Their contribution to the life of the school, their interaction with the local and wider community and their spiritual and cultural development are satisfactory, but the school could do more to promote these important aspects. Therefore, at present, pupils' preparation for their future life is no higher than satisfactory.

Teaching is satisfactory overall, but stronger and usually good in Year 6. Here teachers have high expectations and lessons have a swift pace. Elsewhere, learning is adequate but can be patchy because teachers do not plan skilfully to challenge pupils of all abilities. In addition, the subject matter is often not exciting enough to motivate pupils fully. For example, teachers do not make the most of opportunities to promote literacy and numeracy through other subjects.

The school takes good care of its pupils. Efficient procedures for key aspects, such as child protection, are effective and teachers take a close interest in pupils' welfare. As a result, pupils feel safe, valued and enjoy school; their attendance is satisfactory. The school has an accurate picture of pupils' progress through good tracking systems which help teachers especially to prevent pupils from underachieving.

The school is led and managed satisfactorily. The headteacher has handled a difficult period sensibly and, supported by senior staff, he has initiated new procedures, which have succeeded in improving achievement. The school's view of itself is satisfactory. It is aware of its strengths but is not objective and rigorous enough in its analyses to enable the school to move forward emphatically.

Parents think well of the school but are not involved enough in their children's education. Governors are supportive but do not hold the school to account as much as they should. The school has addressed the issues from the last inspection satisfactorily. In view of this and the combined will to improve by all staff, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers plan more skilfully in order to raise achievement in speaking, listening, writing, and problem-solving in mathematics and investigative skills in science.
- Provide a richer and more stimulating curriculum that inspires pupils and broadens their horizons.
- Ensure that the school's self-evaluation is more rigorous and tightly linked to outcomes.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory by the time they leave the school. Despite the imbalance of boys and girls, there are no consistent differences in their achievements over time. Pupils usually enter Year 3 with knowledge and skills that are below average, although this is changing and attainment on entry is now closer to average. By Year 6, pupils' standards in the national tests of 2005 were significantly below average in all subjects and their achievement was low. This was especially because more pupils than usual had learning and behavioural difficulties.

Pupils have performed better in the 2006 tests. Standards were below average but not by much. Inspectors agree with the school's records that achievement in the current Year 6 is satisfactory, not better yet because weaknesses persist in speaking, listening, writing, as well as problem-solving in mathematics and investigations in science. In addition, not enough pupils achieve higher levels because teachers do not set them work that is consistently challenging. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress academically and also in their behavioural and emotional development, because of improved support.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, well-being and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are all satisfactory. Pupils are mostly well behaved, enjoy school and form good relationships with others. Their knowledge and understanding of the lives and cultures of people beyond their locality are, however, relatively narrow. Despite willingly taking responsibility for a variety of jobs in and around school, for example, as buddies to help younger children, pupils' ability to take responsibility for their own learning is not as advanced as it should be.

The school's good efforts to encourage pupils to eat sensibly, act safely and keep fit have paid off well. They have a good understanding of the choices required to be fit and healthy. Pupils are pleased and their self-esteem rises when their efforts are recognised by the school. For example, they proudly wear their Digital Excellence Award badges for excellence in information and communication technology and they unselfishly applaud others when they reach their targets for literacy and numeracy.

Pupils creditably raise funds for others less fortunate than themselves and develop sensitivity to others in their community in lessons in personal, social and health education. Given the adequate levels of academic and personal development, pupils are prepared satisfactorily for success in their future life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are strengths in the management of behaviour for all pupils and in the support for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. Lessons usually have a clear purpose and the work is set at an appropriate level. Often, however, learning activities are not relevant enough to pupils' lives and lessons lack sparkle and excitement. At times, pupils are expected to listen for too long, which slows their rate of learning.

This is not always the case, especially in Year 6, where teaching and learning are good. One outstanding lesson typified this. Pupils were highly motivated by lively and exciting learning activities and the excellent use of praise and encouragement that helped and rewarded their good work. In most lessons, though, pupils are directed and led too much. As a result, they have too little chance to express themselves and work with reasonable independence.

There have been good improvements recently in the use of assessment to support teachers' planning. Good systems are now used to record and monitor the progress of pupils. Their use in targeting and improving the performance of pupils is not yet used effectively in all classes.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. All subjects follow recommended guidelines and so ensure that pupils receive a suitably broad curriculum. There is a good emphasis on literacy and numeracy, although teachers do not make the most of opportunities to promote these skills through other subjects. When they do provide opportunities, teachers do not insist on enough accuracy from pupils.

Interesting activities, such as visits and themed days, enrich pupils' learning. During the inspection, pupils were eagerly anticipating their trip to Durham that would strengthen their understanding of geography and history. However, in the everyday curriculum, teachers follow planning guidelines too rigidly so that work is often mundane and not stimulating enough to enthuse pupils. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good, especially in providing personal support that helps pupils access the curriculum. The introduction of the Listening Matters programme has had a positive impact on behaviour, for example. However, the school does not provide sufficiently for pupils with special gifts or talents.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff give pupils' safety the highest priority. Good arrangements maintain child protection and make sure that all health and safety risks are removed. Great care is taken to ensure that all adults in contact with pupils are thoroughly vetted. Good support for pupils with learning, emotional and behavioural difficulties enables them to be fully integrated into all elements of school life. The school is working hard to involve parents more in their children's education. Initiatives led by the Family Learning support worker are already having some impact but there is still more to do.

The pupils' involvement in their own assessment has improved significantly in recent years and is starting to boost pupils' learning. The academic progress of pupils is now systematically monitored and pupils are aware of what they need to do to get better.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior staff have the right priorities for the school and have introduced good new initiatives, such as the Improving Schools Project and the Listening Matters programme. The comparatively new senior management team is developing a good professional relationship and shares the same vision for the school.

The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory. The school is aware of its strengths and most of its areas for development. However, action plans are not firmly based on shrewd analyses of weaknesses and carried out with sufficient impetus. In addition, the senior staff and governors do not consistently ensure that the quality of the school's provision is measured by its outcomes. For example, the effectiveness of teaching tends to be judged on teaching skills rather than on the level of pupils' achievement.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors work hard and give valuable support in times of need. However, the school finds it difficult to recruit governors and new governors are, by their own admission, 'on a steep learning curve'. The 20% of parents who responded to the questionnaire think highly of the school.

Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Pupils' achievement has slipped but recovered, and key issues have been resolved. The staff are eager to improve and working hard to overcome pupils' weaknesses in the main subjects. Therefore, the school is in a satisfactory position to develop further.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

South Stanley Junior School

Tyne Road

South Stanley

Stanley

County Durham

DH9 6PZ

16 November 2006

Dear Children

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the inspection of your school. Mr Byrne and I thoroughly enjoyed meeting you all. Your comments helped us to gain a clear picture of your school.

We believe that your school gives you a satisfactory education. Your standards in English, mathematics and science are a little below average, but you make satisfactory progress by Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well. You all behave well in and out of lessons and look after one another well. You increasingly lead a healthy lifestyle and it is good that your school council is getting under way. You have a satisfactory knowledge of your own locality, but do not yet know enough about the wider world and other cultures.

You feel happy and secure at school because teachers take good care of you. Teachers use good systems to check your progress and give you advice on how to do better. This is beginning to improve your work. There are some exciting activities outside lessons that you clearly enjoy but we feel that lessons are not usually interesting enough to motivate you to do your best. Teachers share our opinions and intend to improve this. Your headteacher has introduced some good things that have helped you. For example, the Listening Matters programme has improved behaviour and the new ICT equipment, that arrived when we were there, will provide you with up-to-date technology.

We think that there are other things that the school could do to improve your progress. You especially need more opportunities to develop your speaking, listening and writing skills in all subjects, as well as your problem-solving in mathematics and investigative work in science. You can help by concentrating harder and always taking a full part in lessons. We have also asked the school to double-check that all of its plans for improvement are exactly what you need to become better.

Mr Byrne and I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Scott

Lead Inspector