



Stoke Prior Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 116736
Local Authority Herefordshire
Inspection number 290617
Inspection date 21 February 2007
Reporting inspector Paul Edwards

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Stoke Prior
School category	Community		Leominster
Age range of pupils	4-11		HR6 0ND
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01568 760207
Number on roll (school)	70	Fax number	01568 760207
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Raymond Barker
		Headteacher	Sally McCamley
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Stoke Prior Primary is a small school. There are three classes, each with pupils from three year groups. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. One third of the pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities and this is a much higher proportion than seen nationally. The children start school in the Reception Year with skills that are below average. Pupil mobility is relatively high due to the popularity of the school, resulting in parents from outlying areas choosing to move their children to the school in years other than the Reception.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'I would like to say, as a parent, that I could wish for nothing more from a primary school than what my children have received; an environment of warmth, care, friendship and growth for their future.' This comment from a parent was indicative of the views of many others. The parents are right to be pleased with the school. The combination of a rich, diverse curriculum, excellent provision for pupils' personal and social development and the high level of care and support afforded to pupils ensure the quality of education provided is outstanding. As a result, the pupils' achievement is outstanding.

Children are provided with an excellent start in the Reception class, where they are provided with a range of stimulating activities that help to develop their love of learning. Throughout the school, pupils achieve exceptionally well and, by the end of Year 6, attain standards that are significantly above the national average. Standards in English and science are particularly high. Pupils achieve so well because teaching is consistently good. However, the school has rightly recognised that teachers need to make even better use of assessment information to ensure that a very small number of the most able pupils do even better in mathematics. Improved target setting and support for these pupils is beginning to improve their achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve particularly well because of the high level of effective support provided by all staff. The teachers' own enthusiasm is infectious and this provides good encouragement for the pupils to do well. The teachers' good subject knowledge is bolstered very well through the use of outside staff with particular skills in music, art and physical education.

Pupils' personal and social development and well-being is outstanding, with an excellent foundation being laid in the Reception class. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, as is their enthusiasm for learning. They are very keen to take on responsibility and the school council were eager to point out some of their successes. In particular, the outside signs, for example, the one depicting the life history of the frog, have 'brightened up the play areas'. The pupils are very keen to follow a healthy lifestyle and make good use of the trim trail. They also talk enthusiastically about the very wide range of sporting clubs and activities in which they participate. The outstanding curriculum provides the pupils with a range of rich and stimulating activities. The teaching of French and the recent introduction of Spanish add significantly to the pupils' enjoyment. The care, guidance and support provided are outstanding and these help pupils to learn in a very safe and supportive environment.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher combines her love of teaching and leading the school very effectively. Good structures are in place to monitor the effectiveness of the school and all staff are keen to move forward and become even better. The good improvements since the previous inspection, together with the enthusiasm and skill of the staff, show that it is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers make more effective use of assessment information to plan work for the most able pupils in mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils achieve exceptionally well. When children enter the Reception class their skills are below those expected for their age. They are provided with a very rich and stimulating curriculum with a good emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is very well matched to their level of maturity and they make excellent progress. Most achieve the goals expected of them on entry to Year 1, although the small number of pupils results in a wide variation. Excellent progress continues throughout the school. Assessments at the end of Year 2 show pupils achieve well, although fewer pupils than might be expected attain the higher levels in mathematics. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 show pupils attain standards that are much higher than those seen nationally, a picture that has been seen over the last four years. Whilst all groups of pupils achieve extremely well, the school has rightly recognised that, occasionally, a very small number of more able pupils could do even better in mathematics. Improved teaching, better use of assessment information and the judicious use of support staff are already beginning to have a good impact on the progress of these pupils. A significant number of pupils with learning difficulties enter the school part-way through their education. They achieve particularly well because of the very clear identification of their needs and the provision of high quality support and guidance.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are quick to outline the advantages of being a pupil at Stoke Prior. In particular, they feel that 'teaching is challenging but fun'. The pupils' enjoyment of school and very good attitude towards learning is evident in their above-average attendance and high level of participation in clubs and out-of-school activities. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Older pupils look after younger ones and are proud to talk about their role in the community. The school does much to ensure that pupils are aware of life beyond their small rural community and visits to diverse places of worship in Coventry help considerably in this respect. So too does the school's link with a school in Tanzania. The pupils' sale of harvest produce helped the linked school to purchase new gates. This is one of the very many charitable fund-raising activities organised by the pupils. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the importance of adopting a healthy and safe lifestyle. Many pupils put their knowledge into practice, thoroughly enjoying the wide range of physical activities on offer and choosing to eat the fruit and vegetables provided by the school. The pupils' strong literacy, numeracy and information and communication

technology (ICT) skills, together with their excellent personal skills, prepare them extremely well for their next stage of education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good. In the Reception class, particular strengths are the way in which lessons take good account of the children's level of maturity and the opportunities carefully planned for younger children to work and play with their older classmates. These help to accelerate their progress. Planning for the mixed-age groups is good throughout the school, with work well matched to pupils' age and ability. Pupils achieve well because the teachers expect a lot from them and create an atmosphere where learning is enjoyable. Planning and co-operation between staff is good and very good use is made of individual expertise. For example, standards in mathematics are improving because of the skilled input by staff. However, staff realise more effective use needs to be made of assessment information to plan work for the most able pupils in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities learn exceptionally well throughout the school because staff match the level of work very closely to their ability. Teachers place considerable emphasis on developing the pupils' speaking skills and this is evident in the confident way in which they respond to adults.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Whilst the school rightly gives good attention to developing the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, considerable thought has gone into providing them with a rich and varied range of activities. Strong links with the secondary school significantly enhance the school's sporting activities. These contribute significantly to pupils' health and well-being. The school's successful quest to enrich the curriculum has seen the introduction of French lessons, a Spanish club, and a wealth of sporting, art and musical activities. In addition, visits and visitors contribute significantly to the pupils' education. This wide range of enrichment activities contributes very well to the pupils' enjoyment of school and their behaviour. A parent rightly pointed out that 'the school is very attuned to the individual needs of the children and offers a wonderful range of really interesting activities, projects and outings which broaden their horizons.'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Detailed and structured assessment of pupils' work provides teachers with a very clear indication of how well pupils are doing. As a result, teachers are able to match the level of work very closely to the pupils' needs. This is particularly effective for those pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils are guided and supported well, enabling them to achieve their potential in most aspects of their work. The pupils'

understanding of how well they are doing helps them to strive for the next level and to meet challenging targets. Occasionally, staff could make even better use of assessment information to ensure the most able do even better in their mathematics. Pupils feel very safe and know who to turn to in the event of trouble. Arrangements to protect pupils from harm, including child protection and staff vetting procedures, are good. Health and safety audits of the premises and risk assessments for activities are thorough. Pupils who enter the school later in the year are supported well, enabling them to settle quickly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher has been very successful in creating a strong team of committed staff. Staff at all levels make regular checks on the areas for which they are responsible and lead the drive for improvements where necessary. There is a refreshing enthusiasm amongst the staff and, whilst there is a continued drive to improve standards, the school is successful in its determination to make the curriculum more diverse and interesting for the pupils. A more detailed process for tracking the pupils' progress has been introduced and is providing staff with a good picture of how well pupils are doing. The process is currently being examined to determine if further improvements can be made that could provide earlier indications of any underachievement. The governors, very well led by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable chair, provide good support for the school and are regular visitors. The views of parents and pupils are canvassed and, where appropriate, acted upon. This has helped to form the strong links that exist between home and school.

The school monitors its work effectively but, whilst accurately identifying what it does well and what might be improved, it is too modest in its own evaluation of its overall effectiveness. This stems from its desire to be even better than it is already, and it is extremely well placed to bring this about.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently and for telling me about your work. I know from what was said that you really enjoy your school. I am pleased because it is providing you with an outstanding education.

These are some of the best things about your school

- You make outstanding progress in your English, mathematics and science, so that you do very well in national tests at the end of Year 6.
- Your excellent behaviour and your enthusiasm for lessons and other activities.
- The wonderful range of interesting and exciting activities that you all undertake.
- Your involvement in lots of physical activities and understanding of what you need to do to keep healthy.
- The way you look after one another.
- The good teaching and effective support you get from adults in the school.
- How extremely well the headteacher and other staff manage the school.

This is what the school needs to do to make it even better

- Make even better use of information about how well you learn to plan work for you in mathematics which makes you have to think hard, particularly for those of you who find work a little easy.

I am pleased that you enjoy school and I hope that you will all continue to work hard. I wish you all the best for the future.

Thank you again for helping me with my work.