



Stanah Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119296
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291376
Inspection dates 7–8 February 2007
Reporting inspector Sheila Mawer

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lambs Road
School category	Community		Thornton, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	4–11		FY5 5JR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01253 825225
Number on roll (school)	420	Fax number	01253 851487
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr David Simpson
		Headteacher	Mr Ian Todd
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 7–8 February 2007	Inspection number 291376
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This large school serves a mixed catchment area, with over half its pupils coming from beyond its immediate locality. Very few pupils are entitled to receive free school meals. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. Almost all pupils are from White British families. The school does not have a Nursery, but has established close links with a privately run Nursery in the same building. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools and Investors in People Awards. During the last school year there were significant staff changes. A new headteacher and permanent deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with good features. It is improving after a period of disruption to staffing and management, which reduced pupils' learning and progress. The school's self evaluation provides an accurate diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses, although judgements on curriculum and care, support and guidance are too modest. As a result, the new management team and governors, under the effective and energetic guidance of the new headteacher, are focussed on what needs to be done to raise standards and drive improvements. Robust systems have been devised for tracking the progress that pupils make, and this is beginning to have a positive impact on achievement. The school has a good capacity to improve further with strong leadership and a settled teaching staff now in place. The school has rightly identified that the skills of subject leaders in helping to raise standards across the school is limited.

Achievement is satisfactory, taking account of pupils' starting points. The Foundation Stage provision is good and children make good progress. By the end of Year 6, standards are average and progress is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall and mostly good in Reception and Year 5 and 6. However, marking lacks consistency in helping pupils to improve their work.

Parents overwhelmingly appreciate the strengths of the school and know that the new leadership team is building on these. One summarised the views of many when writing, 'My child is so keen to learn and being in school is made pleasurable by such a wealth of activities'. This is an inclusive school that helps all pupils to settle quickly. There are features of outstanding provision in personal development due to strengths in relationships. Pupils display a strong confidence in their learning, behave well and relish opportunities to take on more responsibilities within the school.

The exciting curriculum adds much to their motivation and enjoyment of learning. Levels of care, support and guidance are high and enable pupils to feel safe, understand how to stay healthy and valued. The school offers a wide range of opportunities outside the school day to support children and their families. These include a breakfast club, out of school care and family learning courses. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are securely in place, but there has been insufficient monitoring by governors in the past to assess the impact of health and safety policies and procedures on provision in the school. This is being addressed by the new headteacher.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in the infant and junior classes in English, mathematics and science by ensuring that teaching and learning are consistently good.
- Develop the skills of subject leaders to lead and manage their areas of responsibility.
- Raise the quality and consistency of marking to help pupils to improve their work.
- Ensure that governors monitor the impact of health and safety policies and procedures in the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children join the school in Reception with average knowledge and skills. They are given a positive start to their learning through effective teaching and most enter Year 1 having made good progress and reached the goals expected for their age. In the rest of the school, progress slowed in 2006, especially in the infant classes, due to the disruptions caused by the changes in management and staffing. In the 2006 tests, results were below average by the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6. Previously standards have generally been above average. The new leadership team is taking appropriate action to raise standards, with pupils starting to make stronger gains in their learning and better progress. Pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 are reaching average standards, with a strong increase in the number reaching the higher levels in Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school extremely well. This is reflected in their above average attendance and their keenness to learn, which impacts positively on their progress. They get off to a strong start in Reception, where their good self-esteem and confidence helps them work independently. Throughout the school, pupils are very appreciative of the support they receive from their teachers and say they are 'fun and very kind'. The good systems for promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and the way they respect each other. Having helped to draw up the anti-bullying policy, pupils are sensitive to the needs of one another. The 'school pals', who support younger pupils at break times, make sure that bullying hardly ever happens. When it does, pupils report that it is dealt with effectively. The school's approach to developing spiritual awareness has improved since the last inspection through better planning in religious education and more time for pupils to reflect on issues in lessons. Pupils know how to keep safe and are aware that a balanced diet and regular exercise contributes to their good health. They put theory into practice through high levels of participation in sporting activities after school and running a healthy tuck shop at break times.

Pupils contribute to school life very effectively. House captains develop responsible attitudes when they organise monitors to carry out various duties around the school and check how well they are doing. The school choir and band contribute to pupils' citizenship education through the concerts they give to the wider community. A well-established school council gives pupils a strong awareness of democracy and how to share their ideas. It provides a good basis for their future working lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Through rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher, the school accurately judges teaching and learning to be satisfactory. Staff changes and absences have until recently affected its overall quality. This slowed pupils' progress, especially in the infant classes and pupils are still catching up. There is now a strong team of teachers who are committed to improving the quality of pupils' learning.

In Reception, the teaching is good and thorough assessment is used well to target support for groups of children. Typically, lessons through the rest of the school are well organised. Teaching assistants make a good contribution and ensure that pupils and especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities are fully engaged in their learning and achieve as well as their peers. Pupils are keen to contribute to lessons because teachers make the learning interesting. In the one outstanding lesson, all elements of teaching and learning were exemplary and challenging questions encouraged active participation from all pupils, enabling them to make exceptionally good progress. In otherwise satisfactory lessons, expectations of what children can achieve are sometimes too low, the pace slows and there is not always sufficient focus on what pupils should be learning to enable good progress to be made. Marking is satisfactory. Some of it tells pupils how they can improve their work, but this is not a consistent feature in all classes and too often ticks or bland statements are used rather than constructive comments.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has developed a rich curriculum that encourages pupils to enjoy their learning. It makes a significant contribution to their personal development and their capacity to stay healthy and safe. They particularly enjoy the enrichment afternoons, which they call, 'wonderful Wednesdays and thrilling Thursdays'. Improved planning is beginning to ensure that the teaching of basic skills is given a higher profile in enrichment sessions, but this has yet to impact on standards. Children in Reception classes experience a wide range of practical tasks across all areas of learning and there is a good balance between free-choice activities and those directed by adults.

The curriculum is particularly effective in meeting the needs of those who have a special talent in modern foreign languages and music. Pupils can choose from French, German or Spanish as well as learning musical instruments. It also provides much interest and challenge for higher attaining pupils and those identified as gifted and talented. A strong feature of the curriculum is the wide range of visits and visitors to the school as well as a wealth of clubs that are run by staff or professional coaches; they are greatly enjoyed by the pupils. No less than three residential visits are provided for pupils in the junior classes. This contributes significantly to pupils' social development and their enjoyment of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for and supports its pupils well. All necessary checks are carried out on adults who work in the school and effective child protection and race equality procedures are in place. Thorough arrangements are made when assessing risks during school visits. Although formal monitoring and evaluation of policies for health and safety by governors have not been carried out frequently enough in the past, this is now receiving attention. Good levels of adult supervision are a feature of break-times and so pupils feel safe, knowing there is always someone to help and encourage them. Good partnerships exist with external agencies and advice to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is readily available and this helps them to reach their targets.

The guidance pupils receive in their academic and personal development is good. The needs of the most vulnerable pupils are known and effectively catered for in the positive support they receive. The school is revising the way it tracks pupils' progress to make it more effective. Pupils are involved in setting and reviewing their own targets. They receive helpful verbal feedback from teachers about how to improve further. This supports their learning well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The good leadership of the headteacher and senior management team provides a clear vision for improvements and staff and governors are united in support of this. Improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory, particularly in addressing the weakness in spiritual development. However, standards in the school are not as high as they were at the last inspection. Clear strategies for improvement and actions are based on a thorough evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses and in full consultation with staff, parents, pupils and governors. This is leading towards better progress, but it is too early to determine its full effect on standards. The school is judged to give satisfactory value for money.

The senior management team has played a significant role in creating a caring and inclusive community where all are valued and respected. The parents' confidence in the leadership and management of the school is rightly placed. Governors, under the guidance of the new headteacher are being more involved in strategic planning and beginning to monitor the impact of new initiatives on provision. They are also improving the way they hold the school to account and providing an appropriate balance of challenge and support to help the school improve. Subject leaders' roles in monitoring and evaluating performance are not developed enough.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

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?	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

The School Council

Stanah Primary School

Lambs Road

Thornton

Lancashire

FY5 5JR

07 February 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank for being so friendly and polite when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking to you all and appreciated your help during the inspection. I was very impressed with the way that the school council gave their excellent presentation to me in such a mature way.

I found your school to be satisfactory, with lots of good features and getting better.

Here are the things I think are best about your school:

- How keen you are to learn and take extra responsibility in school.
- How much you enjoy school and get on so well with one other.
- The way the adults in the school care and support you all so well.
- The good range of visits, visitors and clubs that all help to make learning so enjoyable.
- Children in Reception are learning well and in the rest of the school standards are getting higher.

There are a few things that could be improved:

- I want all of you in the infant and junior classes to keep on working hard so that English, mathematics and science goes on improving.
- I have asked your teachers to show you through marking what you need to do to improve.
- Teachers could look at the way you learn to see if there is anything that could be improved to help you reach higher standards.

So, keep working hard to reach your targets, doing your best and enjoying your school. I wish you all the best for the future!

Yours sincerely

Sheila Mawer

Lead inspector