

Little Stoke Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131699
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	293819
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ann Reed
Headteacher	Angela Greenwood
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001
School address	Little Stoke Lane Little Stoke Bristol BS34 6HY
Telephone number	01454 866522
Fax number	01454 866521

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized school serves mostly families who are of White British backgrounds. There are a significant minority of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The average number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals does not reflect the declining socio-economic status of the area, which is also characterised by high family mobility. Attainment on entry into school is lower than would be expected for children of this age, particularly in personal and social development and speaking skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Little Stoke is a good school which provides pupils with a good quality of education. This is endorsed by the vast majority of parents whose views can be summed up by one parent who explained that her 'children have flourished during their time at Little Stoke'. The quality and provision of the Foundation Stage is also good.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and this is a direct result of the high quality provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their attitudes and behaviour are good not least because school rules are clear. Older pupils reflect the good role models of staff and look after the younger ones. The mutual respect between individuals promotes a harmonious environment and enables all pupils to make a good contribution to the school community. This is particularly evident through sporting events and the popular house point system. Pupils really like coming to Little Stoke and feel safe. This is because the level of pastoral care is very good and the welfare of each pupil is paramount to the school. The pupils know how to keep fit and healthy and this prepares them well for their future well-being.

Pupils are well taught by staff who, as one parent explained, 'put a lot into the teaching of the children'. This enables all pupils to achieve well regardless of ability or use of English as an additional language. Consequently, despite high mobility, standards attained by the end of Year 6 are average and reflect an improving trend over time.

The successful balance of subjects taught and the high quality range of extra-curricular activities on offer ensure that the curriculum is good. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their knowledge through links between subjects. In the absence of a designated outdoor area, the youngest children use the large grounds under adult supervision but this is not always easy to plan.

Whilst the pastoral care is a strong feature of the school, academic guidance is satisfactory and developing. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked throughout the school but systems for improving the quality of their work, such as the process for setting targets and marking, are variable in their effectiveness. Consequently, some pupils do not know what they need to do to improve.

The school is well led and managed by a stable and knowledgeable team which has successfully improved the school since the last inspection. A particular strength is the way in which the school works in partnership with others. For example, it makes full use of sharing the site with the county music service, works well with the local secondary schools and liaises very closely with parents. The latter is evident in the handy booklet which has been produced to help parents understand how their children are taught mathematics. As one parent explained, the school is 'always willing to support the parents to solve any problems that the children might have'.

School self-evaluation is generally accurate. However, procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning are not as sharp as they could be and so staff are not crystal clear about what is good and what needs improving. In spite of this, because of the many strengths in the school, the capacity to make any necessary improvements is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils fully understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Provide a designated outdoor area for Reception children and develop links between subjects so that the pupils can apply their skills.
- Develop rigorous and consistent systems to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards achieved at the end of Reception are as expected for this age group. This reflects the good progress they make, particularly in personal and social development and in speaking skills. In Years 1 to 6, this progress is well maintained and standards are as expected by the time they are ready to start secondary school. The pupils who join the school midway through their primary education achieve well because the support they are given is well focused. Recent initiatives in developing writing skills and scientific knowledge have been well reflected in the improved achievement in these specific areas of learning. The school is aware that achievement in mathematics could be better and has identified a whole school approach to improving key mathematical skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Reception children are confident and happily work and play alongside each other. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 understand the importance of exercising to make their 'heart pump blood around their body' and know that 'five a day' fruit and vegetables help them to eat healthily. They feel safe in school and confidently tell their teachers or other staff if they are unhappy about anything. Attendance is below average but improving because there are very good systems in place to monitor absence. Pupils like coming to school and show positive attitudes in work and play. Behaviour is good because they understand the consequences of the school rules. Earning house points for their school team by working hard and competing in different challenges and competitions ensures that the pupils contribute well within their own community. Their level of basic skills prepares them well for the future and activities that encourage solving mathematical problems help them to have a good understanding of economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good teaching in Reception is based on a secure knowledge of the needs of these young children and an understanding of how they learn through play. In Years 1 to 6, teachers plan their lessons carefully and explanations are clear. This means that pupils understand what they are expected to learn and have a clear focus for the lesson. Questioning is used well to promote independent thinking and this encourages the pupils to solve their own problems. Relationships are good and pupils' behaviour is managed well. Most teachers use their assistants well to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those speaking English as an additional language. However, occasionally, teaching assistants are not used to best effect during the introductions to lessons. Generally, lessons move along at a good speed but, in teaching that is satisfactory rather than better, the pace is slower because teachers talk for too long.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Reception children enjoy a well balanced programme of work and play. The teacher plans a good range of class activities outside to compensate for the lack of a safe and secure outdoor area but this does not fully address this weakness in the provision. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 enjoy their curriculum which is balanced and meets their needs. The good opportunities for trips, such as visits to Weston-super-Mare and to the museum at St Fagans in Wales, are beneficial to their learning. However, more links between subjects would support them further by helping them to make connections in their learning. Local interests are developed well, particularly through the links with the local aircraft industry at Filton. The good personal, social, health and emotional development programme promotes their own well-being. Involvement in the good range of sporting and musical clubs helps the pupils to develop skills which will support and enhance their future lives.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good induction of the Reception children on entry into school ensures that they settle in well and they quickly become part of the community. The pupils in Years 1 to 6 are very well cared for and this contributes well to their enjoyment of school. Procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure, including those relating to child protection, are well established and staff are familiar with them. Personal development is monitored closely and pupils are confident that adults look after them well. Good personal support and guidance is provided for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities with the school working closely with outside agencies to receive the best help possible. The high number of pupils who start Little Stoke midway through their primary education, and many of whom have English as an additional language, are well supported as they settle into school.

Academic support is sound. Most pupils have developed an understanding of how their literacy and numeracy targets can be used to help them improve their work. There are also some examples of good quality marking which moves the pupils along in their learning. However, there are some inconsistencies in the way that their targets and marking techniques are used to support and guide pupils in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, who is well supported by her leadership team, has a good understanding of what needs to be improved. The clear development plan sets a strong steer for the future direction of the school. Curriculum leaders, including those responsible for the Foundation Stage, have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the subjects for which they have responsibility. This is because they track pupils' achievement well and thoroughly analyse test results. For example, weaknesses in writing skills have been rectified by story telling initiative, and an improved science programme, including a focus on scientific vocabulary, has resulted in an upward trend in standards. Strong and knowledgeable governance ensures that the school is well supported and challenged in its work. However, the methods used to evaluate teaching and learning are not sufficiently rigorous enough. As a result, the

overall quality of teaching and learning is not fully understood and agreed by all levels of leadership within the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	2
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	3
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2
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?	2
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

10 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Little Stoke Primary School, Bristol, BS34 6HY

Thank you very much for making me so welcome at your school. I would like to say a special thanks to all the pupils I met who told me all about life at Little Stoke Primary School.

Your school provides you with a good education. You feel safe and cared for because the school looks after you well. It gives you high quality support with your learning. You make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, reach the expected standards in all your subjects. Teaching and learning are good because your teachers are knowledgeable and explain lessons well. However, I have suggested to the school that you are given clearer guidance on how you can improve your work.

You behave well and have positive attitudes to the interesting range of activities that the school plans for you. You are proud of all the after school activities you are involved in, particularly the sporting and musical ones. You enjoy the visits out of school and this helps you to learn more about different topics. However, links between subjects are not developed sufficiently well and I have asked the school to help you apply your skills much more. Whilst Reception children receive a good education, they do not have an outdoor area to develop their skills and this needs rectifying.

The teachers in charge of the school are leading and managing it well and they are supported by the competent governors. However, there is not a whole school approach to evaluating the overall quality of teaching and learning so I have asked the school to work on this.

Once again, thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults in school to make sure that Little Stoke Primary gets better and better.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone Lead inspector