

Stanbridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109134
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	309891
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Shirley Billington

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	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robin Self
Headteacher	Dill Westermann-Childs
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2003
School address	Stanbridge Road Downend Bristol BS16 6AL
Telephone number	01454 862000
Fax number	01454 862003

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school with 14 classes. Most pupils are of White British heritage but a small, but increasing, number of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic groups. A few of these are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has been through a prolonged period of disruption, with a series of temporary leadership arrangements in place. A new, permanent headteacher took up post in September 2007. The school is still without a deputy head. Several staff have taken on new roles recently.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has been through a prolonged period of uncertainty with several changes in leadership arrangements. Over this period, standards dropped and a significant proportion of pupils did not achieve as well as they should. Clear direction from the new headteacher has ensured that swift action has been taken to address the decline. New systems of tracking and target setting are helping staff at all levels to get a clear picture of exactly where pupils are and what needs to be done to take their learning forward. The information has been used effectively to identify groups that have not made the progress that they should and to target extra support where needed. This is helping many pupils throughout the school to make up lost ground, often very rapidly.

Achievement is now satisfactory throughout the school. Standards are close to average but are more secure in English than in mathematics. This subject is rightly a key priority for improvement. While standards are improving, there is more to do, particularly to ensure that more-able pupils make progress at a sustained rate and achieve as well as they should. Teaching has been strengthened by the introduction of a target-setting process and regular monitoring and feedback on lessons. However, assessment information is not always used to ensure that the range of pupils' needs is met in all lessons.

Good care is taken of pupils, particularly those who need extra support and encouragement. High status is given to promoting pupils' self-esteem and confidence. This results in their good personal development and positive attitudes. They enjoy school and the wide range of activities in which they can participate outside of lessons. The recent award of Healthy School status, to add to the Activemark award, is indicative of the good attention given to pupils' well-being. The core curriculum is being successfully adapted to better meet pupils' needs and to strengthen provision to develop their skills through more creative activities. Good links with other local schools, groups and individuals enhance pupils' experiences.

Leadership is being strengthened by training and support for middle managers so that they are better empowered to carry out their responsibilities. This work is in the early stages and some managers are new to their roles, but they are eagerly embracing the opportunity to extend their skills and play their part in leading further improvements. Much of this work is focused on Years 1 to 6, because of the urgent need to raise standards. However, there is also work to do in the Reception Year. Children's progress is satisfactory overall but they do less well in language and literacy than in other areas. Provision for these areas is limited to some extent by a shortage of resources but also because the activities that children are given do not always extend their skills and understanding.

Overall, however, the school is moving forward and many parents express renewed confidence in the leadership. As one commented, 'I have seen a marked improvement, with a real emphasis on building the confidence of children and maintaining standards.' Given the progress made within a short period in reversing the decline in standards, the school is securely placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children start school with skills generally at expected levels and make steady progress to reach broadly average levels at the start of Year 1. However, there is a variation in how well they do

in different areas of learning. Their mathematical development is generally at a higher level than other areas. Language and literacy development is weaker and provision for this area, particularly for writing, does not always ensure that children extend their skills. Staff in the Reception Year work well as a team and plan together to ensure consistency in the experiences offered. Children are secure and settled in their classes. They enjoy a range of practical activities and often sustain concentration for a prolonged period. Many talk readily about their work but a significant proportion struggle to express their ideas. Opportunities are missed to boost children's speaking skills through well-structured practical experiences. The Foundation Stage has suffered from a lack of leadership over a prolonged period and there are weaknesses in aspects of the provision, particularly in the range and quality of resources.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise overall standards in mathematics by ensuring that more-able pupils make consistent progress and attain higher levels at the ends of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Improve attainment in language and literacy in the Reception Year by planning high quality activities for children to extend their skills and ensuring that appropriate resources are available to support their learning.
- Ensure that activities in all lessons meet the range of pupils' needs and build on existing learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make steady progress in the Reception Year and attainment is broadly in line with expectations by the start of Year 1. However, their skills in language and literacy are a weaker aspect. Standards at the end of Year 2 have varied considerably from above to below average. Greater consistency in pupils' progress is ensuring that they reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

Progress in Years 3 to 6 has been erratic and pupils have not always done as well as they should, given their starting points at the end of Year 2. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been below average for the past three years and in 2007 were particularly weak in mathematics. Action has been taken to address underachievement and this is beginning to have a positive impact. Specific programmes to boost the skills of pupils who have been identified as falling behind are helping many to make up lost ground at a good rate.

Throughout the school, pupils in the early stages of learning English make steady progress in their acquisition of the language. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from well-targeted support and make satisfactory progress. However, more-capable pupils do not always achieve as well as they should, particularly in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils behave well and generally show concern and consideration for others. They work well together when given the opportunity and show appreciation of others' efforts. This was evident in an art lesson where the teacher's demonstration of introducing perspective in a drawing

drew spontaneous applause from the pupils. Pupils show good awareness of safe practices, for example, in the need to take care when using scissors in lessons. They also show good understanding of health-related issues, knowing, for example, why fruit makes a healthy snack. Pupils participate in a wide range of physical activities, enjoying extra-curricular sports, team games and daily 'wake and shake' sessions. The school council plays an important role in decision making, with members being involved in key decisions, for example, in the selection process for the new headteacher. Other pupils also make a good contribution to the school and wider community through taking on responsibilities and participating in local events. Pupils are well prepared for later life in terms of their social skills and attitudes, but key academic skills, particularly in numeracy, are not developed as well as they should be.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Throughout the school, relationships in lessons are good and pupils are generally keen to learn. Their good attitudes are not always utilised as effectively as they could be when, for example, lessons lack pace or there is a lack of challenge in the tasks set, particularly for the more able. Introductory sessions are sometimes over-long and pupils are not sufficiently involved. Too often individuals are invited to respond to questions rather than all pupils being encouraged to think or to work out an answer. In many lessons, good use is made of interactive whiteboards to engage pupils' attention and reinforce key teaching points. Support staff are well deployed to support those pupils who need extra help with their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum broadly meets the needs of different groups of pupils, although lack of challenge for more-able pupils means that they do not always achieve as well as they should, particularly in mathematics. Pupils are given a reasonable range of opportunities to use their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across a range of subjects. The school rightly recognises that there is a need to introduce greater creativity in the way that subjects are linked to make the curriculum more exciting. In the Reception Year, opportunities are missed to extend children's language skills and to encourage them to write independently. Throughout the school, pupils are offered a good range of opportunities to extend their learning outside of lessons through 'theme weeks', extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. Work on the Second World War, for instance, was brought to life by interviewing an evacuee. Strong links with the local secondary school enhance provision for subjects such as science. Good attention is paid to personal, social and health education, which is a key factor in pupils' good personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Good care is taken of pupils to ensure that they feel safe and secure in school. Parents are positive about this aspect, making comments such as, 'My children have always been well cared for as staff are approachable'. Good support for pupils in the early stages of learning English ensures that they are fully included in all activities. Support for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is equally strong. Good links with local agencies ensure that pupils

who need specific care have their needs met. Pupils are encouraged to attend school regularly and the breakfast club promotes a positive start to the day.

Weaknesses in academic guidance have been addressed by the recent introduction of a new assessment system and regular tracking of pupils' progress and target setting. This is beginning to have a positive impact, although still in the early stages. Marking is beginning to be sharper and more evaluative in order to ensure that pupils get a clear idea of how well they are doing in relation to their targets and what to do next to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has a good grasp of what is needed to improve the school and has implemented effective action to address key weaknesses. This has led, for example, to strengthening the provision for mathematics and establishing a structured system for assessing pupils' progress. This is enabling staff at all levels to gain a clear view of attainment in literacy and numeracy and to identify areas that need addressing to further boost standards. Senior staff and subject leaders share a clear sense of direction and are beginning to play their part in leading improvements. Support from the local authority and targeted professional development are enhancing the skills of middle managers in checking on standards in the areas for which they are responsible. New arrangements for the monitoring of teaching and feedback to individual teachers are helping staff to share good practice. A weakness in current leadership arrangements is that there is no assigned responsibility for managing the Foundation Stage. This has led to lack of attention to this area.

Governors have played a significant role in supporting the school through a prolonged period of uncertainty. They have ensured that the budget is well managed and expanded the use of the school for a wide variety of community activities. They have worked hard over an extended period to recruit suitable staff to take on key responsibilities. However, until recently, governors have lacked information about the school's performance and were not in a position to ask relevant questions about the fall in standards.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	3

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

1 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Stanbridge Primary School, Bristol BS16 6AL

You might remember that a team of inspectors visited recently to see how you are getting on. Many thanks to all those who explained the work you were doing in lessons and who talked to us about what goes on in the school. A special thanks to the school council members who talked to us at lunchtime. I thought you might be interested in what we are saying in our report. We found that the school is giving you a sound education. Since your new headteacher arrived, a lot of work has gone on to make sure that you are all making the progress that you should in your learning.

These are some of the good things that we found.

- You behave well and work well together.
- You know how to keep safe and stay healthy – we enjoyed sampling your tasty lunches and were pleased to see how many of you choose fruit as your snack.
- The school takes good care of you and staff make sure that you get a bit of extra help if you need it.
- There are lots of interesting activities for you to take part in. You told us how much you enjoy all the clubs, visitors, special events and visits.

We have suggested three things that the school needs to do now.

- Make sure that you achieve as well as you should in mathematics, particularly if you are quick to learn new things.
- Help children in the Reception classes to get even better at speaking and listening and with their writing.
- Make sure that every lesson has different activities to suit your different stages of learning.

Thank you again for all your help.

Best wishes

Shirley Billington Lead Inspector

Annex B

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Shirley Billington
Lead Inspector