

Stenson Fields Primary Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112781
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	311002
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	272
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	28
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Foster
Headteacher	Mrs S Smith
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Heather Close Stenson Fields Sinfin Derbyshire DE24 3BW

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Inspection number	311002

Telephone number
Fax number

01332 772452
01332 765129

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspection looked at the work of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision in detail. The inspectors also evaluated the school's overall effectiveness and investigated the following issues:

- How well is the curriculum planned and does teaching cater for the range of age and ability in classes so that all make good progress?
- How challenging are targets, and how well are pupils involved in setting their own targets and measuring progress?
- How rigorous are the school's methods for evaluating its own performance?

Evidence was gathered from a range of local and national data, the information that the school has on tracking pupils' progress, the school self-evaluation form, school improvement plan and lesson observations. Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leadership team and staff, members of the governing body and pupils. Parents' questionnaires were analysed and the school's systems for safeguarding pupils were checked. Other aspects were not investigated in detail but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate within the report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average with an average number having statements of special need. The main needs arise from speech, language and communication difficulties. The majority of the school population are White British, although a well above average proportion are from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds, mostly Indian, Pakistani or mixed heritages. The growing proportion speaking English as an additional language is double the national average and, for most of these pupils, their home language is Punjabi. The EYFS is provided in the school's Reception classes. Children's knowledge and skills differ widely when they enter the school. A significant minority have below the expected personal, social, communication, language and literacy skills.

The school has gained Healthy Schools, Artsmark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Anti-bullying Excellence and Activemark awards. Stenson Fields Playgroup and Sinfin Community Childcare offer EYFS provision on the school site but this is not managed by the governing body and, although were inspected at the same time, are reported on separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and rapidly improving school. It has a number of strengths and some aspects that are exemplary. This is due to the excellent leadership and management demonstrated by the headteacher, senior staff and other leaders. Although a number of the recent improvements made to the provision are yet to be fully reflected in pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation is honest and accurate. It highlights those areas requiring improvement and the headteacher and staff act on them accordingly. This has already led to successful action to raise standards and exemplifies the school's outstanding capacity to improve. This is reflected in the overwhelming support of parents. A recent arrival wrote, 'Since my children started at Stenson Fields they have become much happier, confident and are learning a lot more.'

Currently standards are above average when pupils leave the school. This represents good achievement overall. In the Reception classes, good progress is ensuring that most children are close to reaching expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. Good progress usually results in above average standards at the end of Year 2, especially in mathematics. Currently performance in reading and writing is not quite as high, which is mainly the result of children starting school with lower skills in these areas. The school has recognised the need to address this with more focused work on communication, language and literacy in the Reception classes. In Key Stage 2, standards have risen steadily over the last two years because of changes to the curriculum and more detailed tracking of pupils' progress. In particular, work to raise standards in literacy has been very successful. While standards in mathematics are also above average with very challenging targets, work in problem solving, has been less successful. The school has recognised that this is a priority for improvement. Although overall progress is good, that of pupils with learning difficulties is outstanding. Many pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language also make rapid gains in their learning. This is especially so when extra provision and staffing support their learning.

Teaching and learning are of good quality and include some excellent features. Teachers' planning is very effective and is nearly always well matched to the different ages and abilities in each class. For example, in a lesson on number lines while younger pupils worked as a group with the teacher's number line, older ones had their own number line on which to write answers. This enabled the teacher to see pupils' responses and to assess outcomes for pupils at different levels of understanding. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and this encourages all pupils to take a full part in lessons. While behaviour is exemplary in the majority of lessons, the pace of learning slows occasionally when teachers allow pupils to become too talkative and to stray off task. Excellent use of resources and especially outstanding work following visits out of school are evident. For example, in a history lesson following a visit to a local toy museum, pupils had very good opportunities to investigate a number of historical toys. This good teaching is supported by an excellent curriculum, which has recently been redesigned to have a stronger focus on developing skills across subjects, rather than being based on just one subject at a time. This is proving very motivating for pupils, who understand better because many good links exist between subjects. It provides outstanding opportunities for pupils to use skills they have learned in one lesson to support their learning elsewhere. A visit to Matlock Bath, for example, resulted in work in history, literacy, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and high quality art. The curriculum is further enriched through a good range of out of school activities, including a number of well-attended clubs, sporting and musical events.

This is a very caring school and its excellence in this respect is evident in very effective systems for ensuring that all safeguarding requirements are fully met. Pupils with specific learning or physical needs are very well catered for and parents appreciate the way the school looks after their children. One said, 'Staff are always there to help and advise me on my child's progress and well-being.' Care extends to outstanding academic guidance and another very effective feature is the support pupils receive through the very careful marking of their work, target setting to help them improve and individual discussions about their work. Because of the exemplary levels of care shown, pupils' personal development is outstanding. They clearly greatly enjoy being at school and their attendance is well above average. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. The skills they are learning, together with the work done to help them to co-operate and collaborate when learning are helping prepare them exceptionally well for their life in the future.

The outstanding leadership and management are responsible for building excellent relationships within the school, and helping to bind together the community beyond its walls. Pupils appreciate the way others live and do a great deal to support those less fortunate than themselves both in the locality and beyond. There is a wide range of detailed evaluation of the success of the school by senior staff and subject leaders and this is used very effectively to raise standards. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. All staff are very enthusiastic and focused on improving the school further. There are excellent partnerships with a variety of outside agencies and these enable the school to spread its good practice and to learn from others. This school lacks complacency and is continually striving successfully to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The EYFS provision is good and improving. The accommodation is very good and the outdoor area has the potential to become an excellent addition to the resources for learning. Teaching and learning are good and children make good progress in most areas of learning. Staff provide an excellent level of care because they have identified the need to focus on children's personal and social skills when they start school. A similar focus is now recognised as being needed for their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.

The EYFS is well led and managed. Good planning through a topic-based curriculum enables links to be made with other classes in the school, and a range of indoor and outdoor activities to be made available. Assessment is ongoing, often through direct observations, and enables staff to have a clear picture of children's progress. Their welfare has a high priority and very good arrangements are in place for starting school and maintaining links with parents.

What the school should do to improve further

- Complete planned improvements to the progress made in mathematics, especially in solving problems in Years 3 to 6.
- Raise standards in children's communication, language and literacy skills in the Reception classes and Years 1 and 2

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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?	2
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

9 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Stenson Fields Primary School, Sinfin, DE24 3BW

I am writing to thank you for the way you made us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. We especially enjoyed talking with some of the older pupils, and visiting you in the classrooms to share in your work. You were very polite and helpful. We agree with you that your school is good and it is getting better all the time as Mrs Smith and the teachers work hard to help you learn even more successfully. These are some of the things we liked the most:

- Your excellent behaviour helps teachers help you to learn and you all get on very well together.
- You have a great understanding of how to keep yourselves healthy and safe, and you really enjoy school. This is because the staff care for you so well.
- Teachers plan some very good lessons for you and you find the work very interesting, especially after you have been out on a visit.
- You reach good standards in your work by the end of Year 6.
- The school is outstandingly well led by Mrs Smith and her staff.

To help make the school even better in the future we have asked the teachers to do these two things, as well as all the other ideas they have:

- Help you get even better at mathematics, especially in Years 3 to 6.
- Help the youngest children to grow even more confident at speaking, listening, reading and writing, and to continue this in Years 1 and 2.

Thank you again for your help. Enjoy your time at Stenson Fields and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector