

Stretham Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110645
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	325190
Inspection date	29 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Robert Drew

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)	144
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	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tom Lowther
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Robertson
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wood Lane Stretham Ely Cambridgeshire CB6 3JN

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	29 January 2009
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Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: clarifying standards on entry to the school and at the end of each key stage; pupils' personal development; the quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management; the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). They gathered evidence from observations of lessons and around school, discussions with staff, pupils and the vice chair of governors, a scrutiny of documents and pupils' work. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in as much detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average, serving pupils from Stretham village and its surrounding area. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage with only a tiny number from minority ethnic groups. More pupils than usual have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and statements of educational needs. Very few use English as an additional language and none is at an early stage of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is less than half the national average. Boys significantly outnumber girls in most year groups. The school holds the Basic Skills Mark, Healthy Schools Award and the Active Mark. The headteacher is in only his second term at the school.

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 school. Pupils make an excellent start in EYFS, where provision is outstanding. All other features of the school are good and its headteacher and governors are right to be seeking excellence across Key Stages 1 and 2. This aspiration is achievable since the school demonstrates a good capacity to improve and is already very effective.

Standards in the school are above average. At the end of Key Stage 2, English, mathematics and science results have been well above national levels in most recent years. A dip in 2008 narrowed the overall gap, though in science, high standards have been sustained. Key Stage 1 standards have risen from average to above average in the last two years. Given that children enter the school with standards a little below expectations, these results indicate good achievement, which is matched by the good progress seen in lessons. Boys outperform girls in mathematics and science results, but in previous years have done less well in writing than girls. The school has focussed with some success on strategies that encourage boys to write with greater fluency and imagination.

It is the school's effective teaching and learning that largely explain pupils' standards and progress. Some variability in results stems from marked differences in the starting points of year groups and in the attainment of pupils joining classes late in the key stage. However, it also reflects scope for even higher quality and flexibility in teaching. Staff deserve credit for making lessons consistently enjoyable and effective. They establish good relationships with pupils, organise their classrooms well and make very good use of interactive white boards and other information and communications technology (ICT). Teachers and teaching assistants collaborate well. Staff give very clear instructions and guidance. Phases of some lessons are outstanding in their impact, with pupils engrossed in listening or working. At times, pace and the involvement of pupils are good but not excellent because of the under-use of strategies such as setting time-deadlines for short tasks or involving more pupils in question-and-answer sessions. Key terms are generally explained from the outset, but occasionally they are not, which holds up pupils' progress for a while.

Another success of staff has been to ensure good behaviour in lessons. Staff confirm that not all classes have demonstrated positive attitudes in the past. The school has done well to analyse and respond to challenges so that pupils are now effective learners. Their overall personal development has also improved and, while not yet outstanding, is already good. This includes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are reflective and considerate. They talk positively about school and confirm this by their conduct in lessons and at play. Their attendance is above average. Pupils are safety conscious without being fearful, they adopt healthy lifestyles and are developing personal qualities to enable them to contribute to the community and eventually to transfer to working roles. They work well independently and there is scope for this to play an even greater part in lessons. There is a good awareness of minority ethnic cultures in the UK and the lives of others in different parts of the world. Pupils are eagerly anticipating the forthcoming Chinese day.

Effective care, guidance and support from the school underpin good personal development. Staff instinctively show caring attitudes and the school's policies add rigour. All statutory requirements are met and the school is consistent in praising good behaviour and positive attitudes and in helping pupils minimise any that are negative. Staff share their own enthusiasms with pupils, for instance, in out-of-lesson sport, music or gardening, and this further encourages

a positive attitude to school life. Academic tracking is secure and improving. There is good data about pupils' progress and targets and staff use it well. A good overview of all aspects of performance is readily available to staff. Pupils themselves are less aware than they might be of their own standards and how to improve. They are not confident in recognising the features of particular levels and matching their work to these criteria.

The school has a good curriculum that promotes enjoyment and good progress by pupils. There is more specialist provision than is common, especially for a relatively small school.

Extra-curricular activities are numerous and well supported. Enrichment is provided by links with other schools, colleges and businesses, especially the sport links with a nearby secondary school. Gifted and talented pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good extra support or challenge.

The leadership and management already provide a good, well-ordered school. This ensures good personal and academic progress for pupils overall. The newly arrived headteacher has quickly established a good rapport with pupils, staff and parents. Subjects are led well because coordinators have a clear sense of responsibility for standards and are good at monitoring and supporting colleagues. The governing body is well informed about the school and committed to building even closer links with teachers and pupils. Self-evaluation in the school is very accurate and has been used to guide improvement. Targets are currently very ambitious, but they are matched by a strong determination to take the school to a new level and a good track record in meeting fresh challenges. Local links are very good, with contributions from the nearby secondary school, which has sports college status, close ties with Cambridge University, Cambridge Regional College and the racing industry at Newmarket. A good contribution to community cohesion is made by the school through these channels. It also enjoys very strong parental support and is broadening the horizons of pupils and adults through links with communities that are different or distant to the local area.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the EYFS in the reception class and have a range of abilities. Overall, these are slightly below the national age-related expectations. The progress the children make is outstanding and they leave the class having achieved levels above national expectations in all the areas of learning. The leadership and management of the EYFS is highly effective in making sure that every child is recognised as an individual and continually assessed to inform the next learning steps. There are detailed records and an extensive range of photographic evidence that illustrate the rich learning experiences provided. In addition, there is a strong commitment to providing an exciting, safe learning environment. Teaching is imaginative and challenging, with high expectations evident throughout. As a result, the children really enjoy lessons and achieve very well indeed. They love learning and are inquisitive, often listening attentively for extended periods. They show great excitement when talking about two- and three-dimensional shapes as one child revealed them on the whiteboard. They develop confidence and independence, which enables them to learn in a safe and secure environment. The school gives physical development and emotional well-being a high priority and children make excellent progress in these areas. Staff work closely with the local playgroup to ensure a smooth transition which enables them to have a good knowledge of each child's starting point. Parents are very appreciative of the high-quality care and education their children receive and are encouraged to form a strong partnership with staff. This has a positive impact on the progress the children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further in both key stages by increasing the amount of outstanding teaching and turning good progress into excellent achievement
- Involve pupils more in their own learning so that they are clear about current standards and how to improve them

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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	2

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?	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
The extent to which 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	2

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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

30 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stretham Community Primary School, Cambridgeshire, CB6 3JN

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We are especially grateful to those who gave up lunchtime to come and talk with us. You are right to be pleased with your school because it is a good one and some of its work is excellent.

We found many good things on our visit.

- The work of the EYFS class is excellent in every respect
- The standard of your work is generally above average, and sometimes well above average
- You make good progress
- Your attitudes and behaviour are good and you seem very keen to help others in school or in the village.
- Your teachers consistently provide good teaching
- The headteacher and deputy give good leadership and management and governors know your school well

If the school is going to be even better in the future it needs to make sure that:

- it raises standards further so that they are consistently well above average in both key stages. This means that good lessons need to become outstanding and your good progress needs to rise to become excellent progress
- staff involve you more in understanding what level you are working at and precisely what skills and knowledge you need to improve.

Best wishes for the rest of your time at Stretham Primary.

Yours sincerely

Bob Drew

Lead inspector