

# Stoke Hill Infant and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113086
<b>Local Authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	338091
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Curtis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	276
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vanessa Newcombe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Mackay
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 January 2007
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, including the school council. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan, safeguarding documentation and the 91 questionnaires returned by parents.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the success of strategies to continue to raise standards in writing
- how well pupils use their key literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects
- how successfully the school has integrated the Nursery into the Early Years Foundation Stage provision.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average Infant and Nursery School. In the Early Years Foundation Stage there is a Nursery and, currently, two Reception classes. A third Reception class will be formed in January 2010 when the summer-born children start school. The Nursery, which opened in a brand new building in September 2008, operates on a flexible timetable, with parents choosing how long their children stay across the school day as long as it is for a minimum of two hours. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, although a significant proportion comes from minority ethnic families. Forty pupils are identified as learners who speak English as an additional language, of whom 11 are supported through specific funding. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. Most of these have behavioural, emotional and social needs or speech, language and communication difficulties.

The headteacher has been in post for one year. At the time of the inspection two classes were taught by temporary teachers who were covering maternity leave and long-term absence. There is a privately managed pre-school on the school site. An after-school club operates within the main school that is also managed independently. These are inspected separately and the most recent inspection reports can be found on the Ofsted website.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. A significant success of the school is its outstanding partnerships both with parents and a wide range of outside agencies to support pupils' learning. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and value all that it offers their children. Such partnerships, together with excellent care, guidance and support, are especially effective in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils learning English as an additional language and other vulnerable groups. As a result, these groups make good progress in their learning and by the end of Year 2 the majority outperform similar groups nationally in the teacher assessments.

An outstanding feature is the stunning success of the Nursery and its very effective integration in to the school's provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As one parent wrote, 'The care and teaching in the Nursery are excellent ' it has been a magical and inspiring place for my son to learn and develop.' Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery because of excellent teaching and learning and the imaginative and creative use of the indoor and outdoor learning areas. Children now in Reception clearly benefited from their first year in the Nursery and reflect the enjoyment of learning evident across the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, while resources and provision in the indoor learning area for children in Reception are very good, the range of equipment to support their outdoor learning is satisfactory. As a result, children miss out on the important opportunities to experience on a regular basis all six areas of learning in an outdoor classroom.

Standards in reading are high and have been for the last five years. In writing standards have improved from below average to above average and the upward trend continues. The effective teaching of letters and sounds and giving younger children, especially boys, greater opportunities for large mark-making has a positive impact on improving standards. Pupils are successful in using their writing skills in other subjects because the excellent curriculum created by their teachers helps them understand that they are writing for a real purpose. Standards in mathematics are above average and there are good examples of pupils using their measuring skills accurately in science experiments. Teachers have excellent relationships with pupils. Their subject knowledge is very good, especially in the teaching of key skills. Teachers' planning is not consistently effective in meeting the needs of all pupils, especially the more able. Planning is not always focused sharply enough on what different groups of pupils are expected to achieve by the end of lessons. As a result, there are times when pupils do not achieve as much as they could within lessons.

The headteacher, since her appointment, has established an effective and committed

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staff team who work successfully in driving the school forward. There is a very clear vision aimed at school improvement, with a focus on the further raising of standards. School self-evaluation is accurate. The successes of the last year, including the Nursery and higher standards again in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, confirm that the school has the good capacity for further improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the quality of the outdoor learning environment for children in the Reception classes.
- Ensure that teachers' planning in Years 1 and 2 is more consistent in meeting the needs of all pupils, especially the more able by placing greater emphasis on what different groups are expected to learn by the end of lessons.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils enjoy school and are very friendly and welcoming. They readily engage in conversation with visitors and enjoy talking about their work and achievements. In lessons they mainly work very hard and show good levels of concentration. In a dance lesson in Year 2, pupils worked together in pairs exceptionally well to plan, perform and refine their 'animals dance'. In a design and technology lesson in Year 2, pupils showed very good sustained concentration when working individually on making their finger puppets. In Year 1 pupils showed an impressive level of understanding that during class discussions, the pupil holding 'the mole' has the right to speak and the others must listen. Occasionally interest waivers in lessons and this is linked to insufficient challenge, especially for the more able.

There is no significant variation in the performance of groups in the school. The gap between girls and boys is narrowing and boys do outperform boys nationally in the teacher assessments at the end of Year 2. This year there was significant improvement in the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher Level 3 in mathematics.

Pupils feel totally safe and secure in school and are adamant that no bullying takes place. They have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school, with examples of exemplary behaviour seen by inspectors, when teaching fully engaged all pupils in their learning. Through the school council and pupils' roles as monitors, they make a strong contribution to life in school. The production of a school newspaper by pupils in the after-school 'Newsletter Club' is impressive and takes their views of the school into the wider community. Pupils are prepared successfully for transfer to junior school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teachers make very effective use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning, especially the interactive whiteboards. Teachers use these successfully in explaining new learning and teaching new skills. A significant feature is the way that teachers encourage pupils to use the interactive whiteboards to explain their ideas and thinking to the rest of the class. Marking is good and teachers have high expectations that pupils should present their work neatly, as is most evident in their science and topic books.

Assessment of the performance of groups of pupils is strong. Any potential underachievement is identified quickly and intervention programmes rapidly put in place. Many of the intervention programmes are run by the highly skilled teaching assistants, including those supporting pupils learning English as an additional language. As a result of such programmes, pupils make good progress and catch up on their learning. At a day-to-day level there is inconsistency in the way teachers use assessment of prior learning to plan next steps for pupils and this contributes to a lack of challenge within individual lessons, particularly for more-able pupils.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about the visits they have been on and visitors who come to their school and these are clearly very memorable experiences for them. The school's successful use of the social and emotional aspects of learning programme has a strong impact on strengths in pupils' social skills. The curriculum is planned effectively to give pupils a meaningful understanding of links between subjects. For example, as part of a literacy unit on writing instructions, pupils are expected to apply this knowledge to the writing of instructions to make a finger puppet.

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Parents are unanimous that the school keeps their children safe. Transition arrangements for joining the Nursery and/or Reception classes are excellent. One parent wrote, 'The four induction afternoons are very helpful in building the children's confidence.' A significant feature of the school's work is that parents are actively encouraged to spend the first 10 minutes of the day 'working with' their children in the classroom. This feature deepens parents' understanding of how their children learn and gives parents time to share any worries or concerns with teachers or teaching assistants.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher has brought a real sense of drive and determination to the school that has been embraced by the whole staff team. The leadership team has a determined focus on the need to continue to drive up standards and a relentless approach to the monitoring and tracking of the progress of groups of pupils to address any potential underachievement. All staff work together effectively as a team with a common vision and sense of purpose.

The school works hard to tackle discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, together with those learning English as an additional language, play a full part in the day-to-day life of the school. It is particularly successful in the way in which it embraces the rich ethnic diversity of the community it serves.

The school and highly effective governing body have carried out an audit of community cohesion and plans are in place to strengthen the school's national links. Governors and staff ensure that the school complies fully with all requirements for safeguarding pupils and child protection. Governors are prepared to challenge the school and do hold it to account for the standards achieved.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children in the Nursery and Reception arrive happily at the start of the day and quickly settle to the imaginative range of activities on offer. In the Nursery the outdoor area is extremely popular, with children enjoying the current theme of 'Trolls' and especially playing 'Troll Cricket'. Children show good levels of individual concentration, for example in making models with small construction kits. Equally, they work very effectively as a team in making their troll collages. In Reception children show good concentration and interest when asked to find words ending in 'ck'. Based on their starting points, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the majority work within the goals they are expected to achieve by the time they start Year 1.

Teachers, nursery assistants and teaching assistants have excellent relationships with children. They are particularly skilled in questioning and using this to develop and extend children's thinking. Resources are used exceptionally well, including the use of interactive whiteboards and programmable toys. The range of resources for children in Reception is more limited in the outdoor area and children do not enjoy the free flow between indoor and outdoors. Assessments of children's learning are good, with the use of the individual 'My Learning Journey' building a detailed picture of children's successes in school and at home. Partnerships with parents are excellent and a major factor in children's successful learning.

Leadership and management are good. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader was instrumental in creating an outstanding Nursery within a year of opening. She has developed a very strong team and is in a position to build on these successes as the strengths of the Nursery provision impact positively on that for children in Reception.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents wrote very positive and supportive comments about their children's experiences in the school. Parents are particularly appreciative of the quality of transition into the Nursery and/or Reception, the 'exceptional Nursery' and the high quality of teaching their children receive. Inspection findings support the views of the very few who felt their children could achieve more. The inspectors found no evidence to substantiate any individual concerns, although these were summarised and reported to the school without identifying any individual.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stoke Hill Infant and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 91 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 276 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	76	21	23	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	62	68	28	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	56	62	34	37	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	63	31	34	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	65	71	25	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	64	32	35	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	63	69	26	29	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	53	58	32	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	58	35	38	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	56	34	37	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	59	32	35	0	0	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	62	68	26	29	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	70	77	20	22	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



19 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stoke Hill Infant and Nursery School, Exeter EX4 7DB

Thank you very much for the lovely welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We were very impressed with how friendly you all are. On behalf of the team, I would like to thank the school council in particular for giving up part of their lunchtime to meet with us. I am delighted to tell you that you go to a good school and these are some of the areas that are especially good:

- Those of you in the Nursery get an excellent start to being at school.
- By the end of Year 2 you reach standards that are higher than for most seven-year-olds.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and be healthy.
- You have excellent relationships with your teachers, nursery assistants and teaching assistants,
- You enjoy going on visits and meeting visitors who come to your school.
- The school works exceptionally well with your parents to help you learn and make good progress in school.

Even though yours is a good school, there are two things which I think would make it even better. So I have asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to:

- make sure that those of you in Reception have more opportunities to learn outdoors
- make sure that when planning lessons, teachers make sure that the work they give you to do makes you have to really think and work hard.

Carry on being such lovely young people and work hard for your teachers in lessons.

Yours sincerely

David Curtis

Lead Inspector

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