

South Stanley Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114031
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	338276
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Linda Buller

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carol Jackson
Headteacher	Mr A Black
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at teachers planning, policies and documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils, the records of the assessments of pupils' work and the tracking of their progress, the school improvement plan and the school's records regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning. Questionnaires completed by parents, pupils and staff were analysed.

- the attainment of pupils, especially that of lower attaining pupils in English
- consistency in the quality of teaching, particularly in relation to the rate of pupil progress in mathematics
- the impact of targeted support on the achievement of different groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of leadership and management in driving improvement in the quality of teaching.

Information about the school

This is a below average-sized junior school with a preponderance of boys in some year groups. The proportion of pupils who claim a free school meal is well above average. All pupils are of White British heritage. A well above average proportion of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school currently holds the healthy school award, an eco sliver award and an anti-bullying accreditation.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

South Stanley Junior is a satisfactory school. Actions taken following careful self-evaluation have resulted in rising standards over the last three years. As a result attainment in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2009 was broadly in line with the national average.

Leaders and managers at all levels are fully involved in a wide range of monitoring activities which have been used well to identify focussed priorities for future development. A number of initiatives have been implemented since the last inspection in order to drive forward their plans for improvement. Staffing resources have been reorganised and staff have accessed a range of training opportunities. In several classes the quality of teaching is now at least good; however, this is not yet consistent throughout the school. This continues to impact negatively on the rate of pupils progress overall and is the key reason why pupils' learning and progress remains satisfactory. Therefore, despite recent improvement the school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

The school continues to provide pupils with a good level of care, guidance and support. This is particularly effective for those pupils who are vulnerable or have specific personal or learning needs. Detailed analysis of the information gained from tracking pupil progress is used well to provide targeted support for those who are in danger of missing the challenging targets set for their attainment at the end of Year 6. However, this information is not yet used to best effect to hold teachers fully to account for the progress pupils make whilst in their class and thus improve the quality of teaching further.

Curriculum initiatives such as those aimed at improving pupils' writing skills and raising attainment in mathematics have met with some success. Lower attaining pupils in particular have benefited from a concentration on providing pupils with a clear structure for their work with a strong emphasis on improving basic skills. As a result a greater number of pupils are now working at the levels expected for their age. The impact of this initiative is however beginning to plateau. Teachers are not using their assessment of pupils work well enough to recognise when pupils no longer need the same level of support and therefore provide too few opportunities for these pupils to write independently. Marking of pupils' work is often concentrated on one element of their writing and teachers do not have consistently high expectations of the overall quality of content or presentation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve standards and progress in writing by:
 - using assessment information effectively to provide pupils with regular independent writing tasks matched carefully to their ability
 - ensuring that teachers set consistently high expectations of the content and presentation within pupils' writing tasks.
- Improve standards and progress in mathematics by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems
 - using on-going assessment to amend tasks within lessons to provide pupils with appropriate levels of challenge.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - fully holding teachers to account for the progress made by pupils in their class
 - having a clear focus when observing lessons of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and providing teachers with clear points for further development.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' learning and progress, including that made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is satisfactory. Improvement in the quality of teaching and adaptation in curriculum provision has resulted in raised attainment by the end of Year 6. However, the rate of pupil progress is currently faster in some year groups than others. Throughout the school pupils usually make better progress in English than in mathematics. Where planning and success criteria are sharply defined and used as a focus for teachers' on-going assessment, pupils of all abilities make at least good progress. This was well illustrated in a Year 6 lesson. The teacher provided clear success criteria and targeted intervention and constantly checked pupils' levels of understanding. As a result the pupils made good progress and grew in self-confidence. This quality of teaching is not yet consistent in all lessons and leads to inconsistency in the rate of pupils' progress as they move through the school.

Most pupils say they enjoy school. They have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy, supported through the offer of a healthy free school meal for all pupils and good range of physical activities offered. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They understand right from wrong, willingly support each other in lessons and respond with enthusiasm to the opportunities provided to take on responsibilities around school or to help improve the lives of others through fund-raising activities. When teaching fully engages pupils in their learning, behaviour is at least good and at times exemplary. However, at unstructured times such as in the playground some pupils find it difficult to maintain self-discipline. As a consequence, although pupils

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say they mainly feel safe in school and understand how to follow safe practices, they do have some concerns about how the behaviour of others at these times impacts on their safety and enjoyment.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Provision is good and occasionally outstanding in some lessons. However, some inconsistencies remain and these result in satisfactory, rather than consistently good progress. Pupils are provided with good levels of care. Effective partnerships with other agencies are developed to help pupils overcome social and emotional issues, including for some pupils who display challenging behaviour. As a result the school is able to provide evidence of exceptional progress made by some pupils who have been helped to overcome the barriers to their learning. In the best lessons pupils are provided with a curriculum which engages their interest, and learning objectives are well focussed on improving pupils' knowledge and their skills of application in a range of different ways. Explanations are good and teachers use on-going assessment very effectively to intervene and provide pupils with good quality support and guidance. Enrichment

¹ 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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activities expand pupils' horizons and help them to put learning into context. Where provision is not yet consistently effective: planning is not always based on pupils' prior learning; success criteria are mainly knowledge based; too much learning is directed by the teacher; and on-going assessment opportunities are not taken to provide further challenge. Consequently, pupils are not given the explanations needed to help them understand how their knowledge can be used to help them make good progress in new learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team are fully committed to improving the quality of education. They have an accurate view of where further improvements are needed. The drive to raise pupil attainment has met with some success. An improvement plan to raise attainment further is well focused on a range of appropriate actions and activities. The progress of different groups of pupils is carefully monitored and targeted support is provided to help ensure that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. However, some elements of the schools monitoring and evaluation are not yet sharp enough. Although monitoring activities do generally identify clear points for further development and have resulted in improvement through training and support for staff, lesson observations do not routinely examine the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. As a result the drive for improvement in the quality of teaching has not yet been wholly successful and remains satisfactory rather than good overall. The procedures to safeguard pupils and to promote community cohesion are both satisfactory; however, they would benefit from improved systems to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness. Governance is satisfactory and provides valued support to the school but does not yet fully hold the school to account for its performance.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3

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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

A very small minority of parents responded to the Ofsted questionnaire with their views about the school. The vast majority of these agreed that their children enjoyed school and that they are happy with their children's progress. A small minority of these parents raised concerns about pupils' behaviour. Inspectors judge behaviour to be satisfactory overall and often good in lessons but agree that a small minority of pupils do at times display challenging behaviour when in the playground. The school's procedures for dealing with these incidents were found to be satisfactory; however, the school intends to carry out a further review of supervision and procedures to ensure that all pupils feel safe and happy at all times.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at South Stanley Junior 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 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 162 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	42	10	53	0	0	1	5
The school keeps my child safe	11	58	7	37	1	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	7	37	10	53	0	0	1	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	63	4	21	1	5	1	5
The teaching is good at this school	10	53	7	37	1	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	47	9	47	1	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	53	8	42	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)	8	42	9	47	1	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	47	9	47	1	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	42	8	42	3	16	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	42	7	37	2	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	58	5	26	2	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	53	7	37	1	5	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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



Dear Pupils

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school recently to find out how well you were doing. We found that the school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. Staff care for you well and help you to develop a good understanding of how to follow a healthy lifestyle.

The leaders in your school keep a very close eye on everything! They know how well you are doing and what needs to improve. We think, and your school agrees, that although things have improved there is still a lot more to do to make it even better. For example, the standards you reach in English and mathematics could be higher. Teachers usually guide and support you well in your writing, but there needs to be more times when you get on with your work by yourselves. We have asked your teachers to always expect you to do your best writing in all of your work.

Teachers are helping some of you to understand how to use what you already know, such as your times tables, when solving problems in mathematics. We have asked your school to make sure that all of you are helped to do this and that teachers keep a check on how you are doing in lessons so that when you find work easy they can provide you with more challenging work.

Yours sincerely

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