

Stoke Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118315
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	339191
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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 of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Juliet Wright
Headteacher	Carolyn Cassettari
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They spent six hours looking at learning, visited eight lessons and observed all five class teachers. Meetings were held with the chair of the governing body and vice-chair, the headteacher, other staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation including records of pupils' progress, development plans and safeguarding procedures. Questionnaires were received and analysed from 39 parents and carers.

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

- The achievement of more able pupils to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging.
- How well leaders and managers monitor, track and evaluate school improvement.
- How well the school is raising pupils' attainment in mathematics and for boys in all subjects.
- Whether the curriculum meets the needs and the interests of all pupils.

Information about the school

This is a small school with five classes. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Almost one third of the pupils have special educational needs, which is much higher than found nationally. Their needs relate mainly to speech, language and communication or moderate learning difficulties. Provision is made for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception class. The school offers a breakfast club. There is a pre-school group on the school site which is managed by a private provider and not included in this inspection. The proportion of pupils who leave and join the school other than at the normal times is higher than found nationally.

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

Stoke Community Primary is a satisfactory school. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and contribute much to the community. They are enthusiastic learners who strive hard to do well. Good relationships between pupils and staff help to create a happy and caring working ethos.

Pupils' satisfactory basic skills, their positive attitudes and good personal qualities prepare them adequately for their future lives. Attainment is average and achievement and outcomes for pupils are satisfactory. Within this, the notable improvement in English from the previous year is a result of the school's successful focus on writing and strong leadership in the subject. Standards in science have also improved well in the last year. In mathematics, standards are beginning to improve but pupils are not yet skilled enough in using and applying their mathematical skills to confidently do more complex problem-solving activities. Added to this, their use of specific mathematical language is not always precise enough to help them to explain themselves well. These aspects hold them back from doing better in mathematics and are a focus for the school's work to raise attainment.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and some teaching is good, particularly in English and for pupils in Years 3 to 6. There are some good examples of effective marking which gives pupils clear pointers for how they can improve their work, but this is not consistent. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, but the tracking of pupils' progress is not as effective as it could be. As a result, the work planned and the targets given to some pupils are not always challenging enough. Although progress is satisfactory for most pupils, the more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they might.

The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve based on steadily improving standards. In particular, as a result of satisfactory self-evaluation and development planning, leaders have improved teaching and learning so that pupils have more opportunities to develop and explain their own ideas and discuss their viewpoints and opinions; these aspects are an effective feature of all of the lessons seen. A good start has been made to raise attainment in mathematics and in the use of a new tracking system but more remains to be done. Leaders at all levels are making a considerable contribution to improvements in their particular areas of responsibility. However, there is inconsistency in the effectiveness of how some leaders are enabled to evaluate the impact of their work on pupils' progress and in their role and involvement in school development planning.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the school's monitoring and self-evaluation procedures by ensuring that all leaders play a consistently full part in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and by contributing to school improvement planning.
- Accelerate pupils' learning and progress and raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good by:
 - enabling all teachers to use assessment information more effectively to plan consistently challenging learning, especially for the more able pupils
 - giving pupils more precise and consistent guidance through marking and feedback on how they can improve their work
 - ensuring that learning is challenging in mathematics especially in order to raise attainment for more able pupils, and giving pupils more opportunities to do problem solving and use precise mathematical language.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Following good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, learning, progress and the overall outcomes for pupils are satisfactory between Years 1 and 6. Standards do fluctuate due to the often very small number of pupils taking the Year 6 tests but the three-year trend, which includes pupils currently in the school, is average overall in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs and those who join the school in different year groups make similar progress to others because their needs are quickly identified and effective support is given.

Learning and achievement are satisfactory. Particular strengths in English were evident in pupils' current work. For example, discussion and drama were used with great effect in a Years 5 and 6 English lesson where pupils became absorbed by a reading, explored a character's dilemma in great detail and wrote persuasively from differing viewpoints. This approach is especially effective in motivating boys' learning and narrowing the gap between the attainment of boys and girls. English work contributes much to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Mathematics remains the weakest subject with fewer pupils reaching the expected or higher levels in the test results than in English or science. New approaches have recently been introduced that are beginning to see pupils making better progress, especially boys, which had been weaker in the past. However, these initiatives are too recent to see their full impact on raising attainment. In science and mathematics, higher ability pupils are not being challenged consistently well to gain a deeper level of knowledge.

Pupils' enthusiastic participation in sporting activities and their understanding of healthy eating and balanced diets help them to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils take their responsibilities in class and around the school very seriously, keenly take part in fund-raising ventures and have close links with the local church.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan activities well so that the different year groups in their classes cover the appropriate curriculum for their ages. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and make learning interesting although they do not always provide sufficient challenge for pupils, particularly the more able. The curriculum places an appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), as demonstrated in the award of a Basic Skills Quality Mark but there is room for the curriculum to be more challenging for the most able pupils. A good range of visits and visitors enhance the curriculum well. During the inspection the Years 3 and 4 class visited the Guildhall Museum and as one pupil said, 'You learn more because you can touch it and you know it's real.' The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' good understanding of issues connected with their health and safety. This has been recognised by the Activemark and Healthy School awards. Vulnerable pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are well provided for, which enables them to achieve as well as their peers. Pupils and their families benefit from the work of a home-school support worker. Good partnerships with other agencies make a positive contribution to pupils' well-being and provide well-targeted support. Care overall is good and contributes much to this being a happy school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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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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 headteacher identifies improvement priorities that are suitably focused on raising attainment and embeds ambition and drives improvement satisfactorily. Self-evaluation procedures are satisfactory but do not always enable all leaders and governors to be systematically involved in monitoring the school's performance. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are good.

Leaders promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination satisfactorily. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are met effectively, however meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils has been correctly identified for development.

The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. Leaders evaluate its impact and have clear plans in place for further developing links with schools in other parts of the country. Multicultural aspects of the curriculum contribute to a wider understanding of culture, faith and social diversity and help everyone to have a broader view of the wider world.

Governors are supportive of the school and are often very active in its day-to-day life , for example, by running a gardening club and helping on outings. The governing body has correctly identified the need to develop more rigour in holding the school to account for its performance particularly in raising standards and in its contribution to school improvement.

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
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

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	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Reception class with skills, knowledge and understanding that are below the levels expected for their age. As a result of good leadership and teaching, they make good progress to reach the expected goals for their learning by the time they move into Year 1, although writing is a weaker aspect of attainment.

There are very positive relationships between children and adults and as a result, behaviour is good and children feel safe and secure. Children thoroughly enjoy all the activities on offer. There are good opportunities for children to take responsibility for their own learning, such as registering their own name when they arrive and there is a good balance of activities directed by adults and those where they can make their own choices. As a result, children quickly develop independence. Children enjoy many opportunities for physical activity in the outdoor area, which provides a good resource for play and learning. The environment is stimulating and exciting for children but sometimes opportunities are missed to plan activities that challenge children in their learning, particularly for the more able children. Children make a good contribution to the smooth running of the day by tidying up their class and cooperating well with each other. Children are supported well and their welfare is given high priority.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Almost all of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agree that their children enjoy school and most are happy with their children's experience at the school. This reflects the findings of the inspection. A small minority of those who responded lack confidence in the way the school is led and managed and a few do not feel that there is adequate communication with parents and carers or that the school takes account of their suggestions or concerns. Although satisfactory, the inspectors agree that more could be done to strengthen links with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stoke Community Primary 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 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 112 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	46	20	51	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	46	18	46	2	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	14	36	17	44	7	18	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	36	16	41	4	10	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	19	49	15	39	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	31	18	46	4	10	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	33	22	56	3	8	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)	12	31	21	54	3	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	28	20	51	5	13	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	36	18	46	5	13	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	28	19	49	7	18	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	36	14	36	4	10	5	13
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	41	16	41	6	15	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.



15 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stoke Community Primary School, Lower Stoke, ME3 9SL

You may remember that two inspectors came to your school recently. I am writing to thank you for being so friendly and telling us about your school. We agree with you and your parents and carers that Stoke Community Primary School is a safe and happy place to be.

Your school is satisfactory overall. This means that some things are particularly good and some things need to be better. You do as well as children in other schools in your English and science but you could be doing better in your mathematics. You make steady progress but we think some of you could do even better. We were very pleased to hear that you enjoy coming to school. Well done for trying so hard to become fit and healthy and for coming to school more regularly! We have asked everyone in your school to do the following important things:

- Make sure that everyone is involved in checking how well the school is doing and how it can get better.
- Make sure all your lessons are good and help you to learn and make progress more quickly by keeping a very close check on how well each one of you is learning so that teachers can plan work that is just right for you, particularly for those of you who find learning easy.
- You have improved your writing ' well done for this! Now we want you to do as well in your mathematics, especially by helping you to do more problem solving and by explaining your ideas as carefully as possible.
- Give you more precise guidance through marking and feedback on how you can improve your work.

Thank you again for being so polite and interesting to talk to and well done for helping your community so nicely!

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins

Lead inspector

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