

Stramongate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112188
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	357058
Inspection dates	8–9 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Ann Wallis

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	373
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jean Radley
Headteacher	Michael Poole
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons and saw 17 teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, safeguarding information, pupils' progress data and other documentation. They analysed 62 questionnaires from parents and carers and also those from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether teaching and learning are consistently good across the school and the effectiveness of the school's efforts to improve this further.
- Whether the safeguarding procedures the school provides are a strength.
- The effectiveness of the school's strategies to make the curriculum more creative and relevant for pupils.

Information about the school

This is a well above average sized primary school. A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average, as is that of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has gained Healthy School status and has International School and the Activemark awards.

The privately run provision for childcare, Stramongate School Out of School Club, shares the school's site. It is subject to a separate inspection and will receive its own inspection report which will be published 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

Stramongate Primary is a good school. Pupils' achievement is outstanding because they make good progress and their attainment at the end of Year 6 is high. The school has improved markedly since the last inspection. Attainment has risen, pupils' progress has accelerated and good practice is shared so that teaching and learning are consistently good. Areas for improvement highlighted at the last inspection have been addressed successfully. The school has a good capacity to improve further. Members of the governing body, leaders and managers know their school well because self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. The headteacher has been instrumental in moving the school forward. He has ensured that careful monitoring of teaching and learning and good systems to assess pupils' progress in writing and reading are leading to improvements in the quality of pupils' learning. New methods to assess progress more sharply in numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) have yet to become fully refined and embedded in the school's work.

The school's promotion of equal opportunities and the way in which it tackles discrimination are outstanding. The talents and skills of each pupil are highly valued and all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve equally well. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Pupils receive good care, guidance and support which contributes well to their personal development. They attend school regularly, are punctual and are keen to learn. Behaviour is good, pupils respect their teachers and each other and are kind and considerate to staff and visitors. Safeguarding procedures are good and pupils say that they feel safe in school. The curriculum that pupils follow is good and meets their needs well. However, the school is not complacent and strategies to make the curriculum more meaningful and relevant, by linking subjects more closely together, are beginning to have an impact on learning.

Children have a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They settle quickly into the Reception classes and make good progress. Links across the two classes are not yet fully developed and opportunities for children to learn and play outdoors are sometimes limited.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding because the teaching they receive is consistently good. Teachers set varied tasks and use a range of interesting resources to engage pupils in learning. Most lessons are briskly paced, expectations of work and

behaviour are high and questioning is well targeted. Most pupils know what targets they are aiming for but are not always sure precisely when, why and how they have achieved them.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop further the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - enabling children to choose more frequently when to learn and play outdoors
 - linking more closely the two Reception classes to form one Early Years Foundation Stage unit.

- Further improving the quality of the already good teaching and learning so that more lessons are outstanding by:
 - ensuring pupils understand precisely when, how and why they have achieved their targets
 - embed and refine systems to more sharply assess pupils' progress in numeracy and ICT.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In lessons, pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive by working hard, concentrating on the task in hand and answering questions readily, often at length. They enjoy their learning and their achievement is outstanding. Pupils were seen working very enthusiastically in a numeracy lesson as they carefully costed all the items needed to provide an Indian banquet without exceeding their budget of £500. Work in pupils' books and on display on classroom walls confirms the good progress they are making. The school's detailed tracking data indicates that pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach their challenging targets this year. Children enter the Reception classes with skills broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress as they move through the school to reach high standards when they leave Year 6. For the last three years attainment in English and mathematics in national tests has been significantly above average. All groups of pupils achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from timely and constructive individual help from both teachers and teaching assistants.

Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy and talk knowledgeably about how to deal with unsafe situations and dangers, such as cyber bullying. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities. They enjoy acting as buddies, helpers and members of the school council. They work well together in pairs and teams. These qualities, combined with their very well developed basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT, mean they have a good preparation for their future lives. Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures and appreciate the similarities and differences between these and their own.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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
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 skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are consistently good across the school. Teachers match work well to the needs of all their pupils so tasks are neither too easy nor too hard. They make good use of ICT to display attractive resources which engage pupils' interest and help them to make good progress. Teachers make the objectives of the lesson clear and use well-targeted questioning to check pupils' understanding. In a few lessons, the pace of learning is slightly slower when the teachers' introductions are too long and pupils become impatient to learn for themselves. Teachers assess pupils' work particularly well in reading and writing and this good practice is now being extended to mathematics and ICT. Pupils work diligently towards their targets but are not always clear about exactly how they are achieving them.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs well. A wide range of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum and add to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Year 5 pupils talked enthusiastically about a recent residential trip when they had experienced a range of exciting outdoor activities. Both pupils and their parents and carers are very appreciative of the wide range of extra-curricular clubs the school offers, particularly the opportunities to take part in different sports. The curriculum is reviewed regularly and continues to improve as subjects are more closely linked together.

Pupils receive good care, guidance and support which gives them the confidence to succeed and attain high standards. The school has good links with the on-site nursery, outside agencies and with other schools and colleges. This ensures that pupils make a smooth transition between the different stages of their education. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are well supported and receive specialist help when needed in a sensitive way.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	2

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has improved rapidly because members of the governing body, leaders and managers have communicated their vision for improvement well. Staff feel valued and morale is high. Good practice in teaching and learning is shared freely and this has led to improvements in pupils' attainment across the school. Governance is good. The governing body is involved in determining the school's strategic direction and monitors its work carefully. The school has forged good partnerships with parents and carers. Communication with them through electronic parent mail is very efficient and ensures they are kept well informed about their children's progress. All pupils have excellent opportunities to succeed and are fully involved in all aspects of school life. The school adopts good safeguarding procedures. Staff are well trained and all policies and procedures are fully in place. The school promotes community cohesion well, particularly at local and national levels. Links with schools overseas have developed pupils' understanding of other cultures and helped the school achieve its international award.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Recently, the two Reception classes have been reorganised to enable children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to be taught as a single unit. These changes, although not fully developed, are beginning to lead to staff working more effectively as a team, with a clear focus on promoting children's learning and development. This is proving to be successful in accelerating progress, raising standards and enabling children to achieve well. Children enter the Reception classes with skill levels and abilities as expected for their age. They make good progress overall, and excellent progress in their personal, social and emotional development. As a result, by the time they enter Year 1, their attainment is above average. Careful planning means there is a good balance between activities directed by staff and those chosen by children.

This makes a positive contribution to their development as independent learners. The lack of an adequate exit to the outside play area from indoors restricts opportunities for children to access the area when they wish to.

Stimulating role play areas indoors and outdoors, such as the 'School Kitchen' and 'The Builders Yard', capture children's imaginations as they become happily lost in a world of their own. Children thoroughly enjoy their learning and show very positive attitudes in all their activities. Their confidence thrives in a supportive atmosphere because of excellent relationships with adults. Regular assessment of children's performance ensures their needs are well met. Pastoral care and support are good and statutory welfare requirements are met. An enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher provides good leadership and has rightly identified the need to extend opportunities for outdoor play to bring about further improvement. Induction arrangements ensure children settle quickly into everyday school routines and grow and flourish in a welcoming and stimulating environment.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Of the parents and carers who completed the questionnaire, most were entirely satisfied with education their children receive. They are particularly appreciative of the good progress pupils are making, the range of after-school clubs that pupils enjoy attending and of the good care, guidance and support the school provides. Inspection evidence confirmed these views. A few parents and carers expressed concerns about the way in which the school manages behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour to be good and classes to be well managed by staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stramongate 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 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 373 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	63	22	35	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	71	17	27	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	61	22	35	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	61	23	37	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	61	24	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	66	20	32	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	56	26	42	1	2	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)	36	58	24	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	52	27	44	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	44	30	48	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	50	27	44	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	39	63	20	32	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	58	24	39	0	0	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 is for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



10 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stramongate Primary School, Kendal, LA9 4BT

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. A particular 'thank you' to those of you who spent time with us telling us about your work in class and the things you enjoy doing at school. Please thank your parents and carers for speaking with us and for filling in our questionnaire.

This is what we have said about your school in our report.

- Yours is a good school where you all have outstanding equal opportunities to succeed.
- Your achievement is outstanding because you make good progress and attain high standards.
- You behave well, attend school regularly and know how to stay safe and healthy.
- The care, guidance and support you receive, the curriculum you follow and the quality of teaching and learning are all good.
- Your school is well led and managed.

This is what we have asked your school to do to make it even better.

- Give the children in the Reception Classes more opportunities to learn and play outdoors.
- Make your lessons even better by ensuring that you understand precisely when, how and why you have achieved your targets and by assessing your progress even more carefully in numeracy and in ICT.

All of you can help your school to improve by continuing to attend regularly, behaving well and working with your teachers to achieve the very best you can.

Yours sincerely

Ann Wallis
Lead inspector

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