

Stathern Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119952
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	339565
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Terry Elston

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	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lisa Maughan
Headteacher	Troy Jenkinson
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
School address	Water Lane Stathern Leicestershire LE14 4HT
Telephone number	01949 860316
Fax number	01949 869165
Email address	headteacher@stathern.leics.sch.uk

Age group	4-11
Inspection date(s)	16–17 March 2010
Inspection number	339565

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010



Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the large majority of their time looking at learning; they observed all four teachers and visited eight lessons. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, curriculum planning documents, examples of the ways the school promotes community cohesion, evidence of lesson observations and information from questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and 46 parents and carers.

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

- whether the high levels of attainment in the school's first national tests at Key Stage 2 have been sustained
- the provision for outdoor learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how well the curriculum supports the learning of pupils in mixed age classes.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average school with very few pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is similar to most schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Most of these have difficulties with basic literacy and numeracy skills. The school has recently gained the Healthy Schools and International Schools awards.

Reorganisation in the local authority meant that the school had its first Year 6 pupils in 2008/2009.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Stathern Primary is an outstanding school that fully meets its aims to ensure 'achievement for all in a stimulating and caring environment.' Pupils love school, behave impeccably and the excellent teaching means they make rapid progress. At Key Stage 1, pupils build well on their good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and their attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress quickens further in Key Stage 2, and attainment is exceptionally high in English and science and well above average in mathematics. This continues the pattern set in the school's first national tests in 2009, when the rate of pupils' progress was in the top 1% of schools nationally.

Pupils are very proud of their achievements and always try to do their best. In lessons, they listen intently to their teachers and their hands shoot up to answer questions. They work well independently of the teachers, and share ideas sensibly with one another to solve problems. They are quick to take responsibility, and the school council plays an important part in representing the views of others to improve the school further.

Pupils really appreciate the way that teachers treat them with respect and go out of their way to help them learn. One said how he was particularly impressed by the way his teacher would go without a break to help him tackle a difficult problem. Teachers' planning is exceptional. They think carefully about the different ages and abilities in the class, and ensure that all pupils have work that is demanding but achievable. The excellent relationships mean that pupils feel they can attempt any challenge without fear of failure.

The recently restructured curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils well. The decision to involve pupils in deciding upon the broad themes has proved successful. They work at topics that they find interesting, and are keen to do further research at home. The activities planned for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are made exciting, but the lack of a dedicated outdoor area limits opportunities for them to continue their learning outside.

The school has an excellent partnership with parents and carers who are full of praise for the high quality of care, guidance and support offered to their children. A typical comment applauded the 'lovely caring atmosphere'. Parents and carers who have moved to the school from other schools, or different countries, say how well the staff help their children settle and quickly become part of this closely knit family.

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 strong leadership and management are keys to the school's success. The headteacher's high expectations of pupils, staff and himself are clear in his determination that pupils will achieve the highest standards in their academic work and personal development. The leaders' comprehensive systems to evaluate the provision, and prompt action to rectify any weaknesses, account for the significant improvements made since the last inspection. These strengths, together with the way all staff work so well as a team to raise standards, show that the school is well set to do even better.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - exploring ways that the existing outdoor space can be developed to give them a free flow of activities from the classroom to outside.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

In Key Stage 1, pupils learn quickly in lessons and say how much they enjoy school. They make very good progress in the mixed age class, with Year 1 pupils benefiting from working alongside older ones. The good phonics teaching means they learn to read fluently and tackle unfamiliar words with confidence. Their writing is mostly accurate, and a few are starting to write at length. In mathematics, they develop a good feel for number, although some find it difficult to use their skills to solve problems. In Key Stage 2, pupils race through their work. They are starting to take responsibility for their own learning, and know just what to do to attain the next levels. Their excellent progress in English and mathematics shows in the way they read with expression, write exciting stories and solve complex problems. In science, the school benefits from very good links with a local secondary school that provides valuable resources and expertise. As a result, pupils develop an outstanding scientific knowledge and have the confidence to plan their own investigations. Pupils with basic literacy and numeracy difficulties, as well as those whose first language is not English, make rapid progress. They gain much from the effective support, both in class and during the well-planned small group sessions.

Pupils develop an excellent sense of right and wrong and grow into mature, well-rounded individuals. Attendance rates are very high. Their exceptional awareness of how to live healthy lives is evident in the way they make such healthy choices at lunchtime and embrace every opportunity to take exercise and play sport. This has been recognised by the Healthy Schools award. Pupils' future economic well-being is extremely well provided for because of their outstanding literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, strong sense of teamwork and enthusiastic involvement in enterprises that raise funds for the school and wider community. Their impressive spiritual development is particularly evident in the way they think deeply about people in the world less fortunate than themselves.

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

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

How effective is the provision?

In typical lessons, pupils learn rapidly because the teachers are expert at explaining new concepts and asking probing questions to check on pupils’ understanding. Their very high expectations of pupils’ work and behaviour mean that they make the most of their time in lessons. Pupils learn particularly quickly when teachers set time limits for the work to be completed, and they work frantically to beat the deadline.

Teachers use technology very well to illustrate their teaching and make learning fun. For example, one class made very good progress learning how to double numbers by selecting the correct digit and watching gleefully as the arrow flew to the target. Assessment systems are thorough, and used very well to set challenging targets. Pupils say how the teachers’ marking of their work helps them do better next time.

The curriculum provides a good balance of academic work and topics to enhance pupils’ personal and social development. It is planned carefully so that the different age-groups in the classes have work matched well to their stages of development. The curriculum is enhanced by many visits and visitors that add extra meaning to topics about Charles Darwin, for example, or South American rainforests. The many extra-curricular clubs are popular, and help pupils develop their skills in sporting and creative activities. The school makes effective use of the cramped accommodation, but facilities for physical education are limited.

Parents and carers say how much they appreciate the way staff know their children

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

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

so well and go out of their way to meet their individual needs. The comprehensive procedures for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable mean that they feel safe and very well supported. Pupils are prepared very well for the next stages of their education by comprehensive links with other schools. The school works very closely with parents and outside specialists to provide very effective support for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties, as well as those whose first language is not English. This is why some parents choose this school for their children.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Parents, carers and staff speak highly of the way the headteacher has achieved so much in less than two years. He leads with clear direction and manages change at a sensible pace. The systems for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning are very thorough, and give teachers clear guidance on how to improve their work. The headteacher involves all stakeholders in developing the provision, and this creates a common sense of purpose. All staff with management responsibilities contribute well to school improvement by rigorous analysis of pupils' progress and swift action to rectify weaknesses. However, the outdoor accommodation for the Early Years Foundation Stage has been under review for some time, but remains unsuitable.

The leaders ensure that pupils have equal opportunities to learn, whatever their background or ability, and this helps to make the school a happy place. Any form of discrimination is banished, and racism unheard of. The leaders make excellent use of partnerships with local schools and businesses to enhance the provision, particularly for music, science and ICT. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion by its extensive contacts with different schools and churches. This provision is enhanced by good involvement in national and global charities and links with a school in Peru. This was recognised by the International Schools award.

The governing body is an important part of the leadership, and shows an impressive commitment to the school. Governors support staff well, provide valuable expertise and ensure the maintenance of the robust safeguarding procedures, which are applied across all aspects of the school's work and are constantly kept under review. They are not afraid to hold the school to account. They visit the school often to gain a thorough, first-hand knowledge of the provision, and play an important role in setting the priorities for improvement.

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

These are the grades for 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	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
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

The provision is good and ensures that nearly all children meet or exceed the expected goals in all areas by the end of the Reception Year. Children’s progress is recorded carefully and supplemented by useful photographic evidence. They develop good literacy and numeracy skills because of the many opportunities provided for them to read, count and explore shapes. The comprehensive induction procedures, excellent links with parents and thorough attention to children’s welfare mean that children settle quickly to school routines and feel safe. The good teaching, with a strong emphasis on developing children’s language, numeracy and social skills, ensures that children make good progress in all areas of their development. The classroom is bright and stimulating, and children choose happily from the wide range of activities provided. There is an excellent focus on developing children’s awareness of how to live healthily, and they have fun feeling their heart beat faster after exercise. They enjoy learning outside, but find it frustrating when their equipment blows away or their balls disappear down the slope.

Children develop their personal and social skills well, as can be seen in the way they work and play so happily together and tidy up after activities. They learn the rules for good behaviour quickly, and listen carefully to the teacher. The leaders evaluate the provision rigorously and know what needs to be improved. However, they have been slow to develop the outdoor area.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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

Taking into account:	2
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

The number of responses to the questionnaire is higher than normally found. Parents and carers' views are extremely positive, and they feel that the school gives children an excellent start to their education. They are particularly appreciative of the way all staff know, and care for, their children so well. They value the high quality of the teaching, and the excellent communication between home and school concerning their children's progress. They appreciate the strong leadership and management, and feel that the headteacher has made a very good start. A few believe that limitations in the accommodation affect their children's learning. Parents' views reflect the inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stathern 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 87 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	76	10	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	83	7	15	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	25	54	18	39	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	65	12	26	3	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	61	14	30	3	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	31	67	13	28	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	67	11	24	3	7	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)	24	51	16	34	3	6	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	27	59	14	30	3	7	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	65	13	28	1	2	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	50	19	41	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	29	63	14	30	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	30	73	8	19	3	7	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 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 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.



18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stathern Primary School, Melton Mowbray, LE14 4HT

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. We were very impressed with the way you worked so hard in lessons and played so happily together outside. You think the world of your school, and you have every right to be. It is outstanding!

What we found out about your school:

- You concentrate very well in lessons and make excellent progress.
- You behave really well, and are a credit to your school.
- You know a great deal about how to live healthy lives and stay safe.
- You think a lot about people in the world who are poor or sick.
- Your leaders run the school well and know how to make it even better.
- The activities provided for you are interesting, and you enjoy the many clubs at lunchtime and after school that teach you important skills in things like gardening, music, and sport.
- Your teachers make learning fun and help you when you find things difficult.
- All staff at the school take excellent care of you and keep you safe.

What we would like your school to do now:

- Give the youngest children in the school a special outdoor area in which to work and play.

Good luck for the future, and continue to be such fine ambassadors for your school.

Yours sincerely

Terry Elston
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**