

Spratton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121991
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340063
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2010
Reporting inspector	John W. Paull

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	63
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Enid Jarvis
Headteacher	Kathy Orchard (Interim)
Date of previous school inspection	
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Six lessons, taken by three different teachers, were observed. A number of parents and carers were approached directly to ascertain their views of the school. Responses in 34 parent and carer questionnaires were analysed and taken into account, as were those completed by staff and pupils. Meetings were held with governors, staff and pupils, including school councillors. Samples of the school's documentation were scrutinised, including policies related to safeguarding, future planning and records that track pupils' progress through the school.

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

- whether governors and senior leaders are doing enough to raise pupils' attainment
- how well governors are developing strategies to guard against any negative impact from recent instability in senior leadership
- how pupils themselves value what the school does for their personal development.

Information about the school

The school is much smaller than most other primary schools. It has recently passed through a period of many changes in its senior leadership. The school accommodates children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in its Reception class. It draws its pupils from the village of Spratton and the surrounding rural area. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. In recent years, the proportion of pupils moving in and out of the school at times other than usual has been above the national figure.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This good school has improved well since its last inspection. At that time, the capacity to improve was adjudged good and the school was providing its pupils with an acceptable education. Since then, improvements are evident in all the main issues identified and not least in the quality of teaching, which is now consistently good in all age groups. This means that learning and progress are good through the school, demonstrating that the capacity to sustain improvement remains strong. Despite changes of headteacher, the governing body, by securing active support from the local authority, has shown determination, knowledge and energy in ensuring a strong sense of direction and purpose. The appointment of an effective, caring and experienced interim headteacher has contributed much to accurate, if sometimes modest, evaluation of the school's performance as a basis for establishing what needs to be done next. Many parents and carers recognise this, often drawing attention to their concerns about the difficulties that the school has passed through and the present lack of a substantive headteacher, but nonetheless feeling that provision is good and improving. Typically, one of them commented, 'At the moment, the school is doing really well and my children love it here and are making progress, because the staff know them like family, but I wish the headteacher situation was sorted out'. Pupils feel safe and cared for. They also confirm that they enjoy school a lot and attendance meets national average levels.

Pupils' attainment is average in English and mathematics, although not as good in writing as in other subjects. Pupils do not always write down their ideas as clearly, with the same flexibility of expression, as they do when they speak. National test results in Year 6 indicate that attainment in science is a little above average, having risen well since weaknesses related to the now good curriculum were addressed effectively. Formal tracking of progress is used effectively to set targets and to identify quickly whether any individual's progress slows, so the position can be rectified. That said, the present system is too dependent on the headteacher, and is difficult to delegate further to subject leaders and other staff. Other outcomes, including behaviour, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and pupils' acquisition of skills to prepare them for the future are good. Leadership and management, including governance, are good, including monitoring of teaching. Staff vetting is thorough and carried out conscientiously, as are other elements of safeguarding and child protection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise pupils' attainment further, by
 - bringing into effect a proposed new focus on writing as quickly as possible
 - helping pupils to express ideas in written forms as clearly, precisely and expressively as they explain them verbally.
- Devolve to all staff greater responsibility for the formal tracking of pupils' progress.

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

In the past few years, data related to the school's national test results have been affected considerably by movements of pupils in and out of the school at other than the normal times. For example, several pupils who entered the school with attainment above that usually found left before the tests were taken. Nevertheless, pupils achieve well by Year 6, in relation to their starting points and most attain at least the expected level for their age. For example, in a good lesson featuring Tom Palmer's 'Foul Play' pupils' demonstrated good progress in the use of similes and metaphors, while describing story settings of their own. Their explanations of the difference between expressions in response to their teacher's questioning were lucid and convincing. They were also able to produce interesting examples, illustrative of good learning, including similes such as 'The area is like the vibrant colours of jewels', and 'Jig-Saw City is a web of baking hot ovens', which they correctly identified as metaphorical. Work on display and in their books demonstrates similar good learning, progress and achievement across other subjects. However, written work sometimes lacks the same precision in expressing ideas that is often apparent when pupils make oral responses. The headteacher and staff are aware of this and are already planning a focus on the improvement of pupils' writing skills. Many pupils in Year 3 make good progress and the school's records indicate that many pupils are beginning to outstrip the attainment that is usually expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also achieve well in relation to their targets and starting points. Attainment is rising steadily lower down the school and is currently a little above average at the end of Year 2, especially in reading.

Other outcomes are uniformly good. Pupils know a lot about what is healthy from growing vegetables in their allotment. They also take part enthusiastically in physical education lessons and the sports and activities that enrich the curriculum after school. Pupils' contributions to the community, in and out of school, have improved to a good level since the last inspection. Pupils are very willing to serve on their school council, which they see as an honour. They are willing waiters and servers at a monthly school coffee café for their parents and carers and other village residents. They also take part in civic events, including the local Scarecrow Festival. Good links with the church are also evident. Pupils' understanding of what it means to behave well towards others is well developed, contributing to good behaviour in lessons and around the building. The presence of pen pals at a school in The Gambia, who replied to their own letters, very genuinely excites them. They are respectful during

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times of prayer and reflection during assemblies, and the good quality of their singing further enhances such occasions.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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 workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is consistently good. The headteacher, through formal meetings with the staff and informally at other times, ensures that the tracking of pupils' progress is used effectively to modify what is taught and to adapt plans to take account of prior attainment, so establishing realistic targets. That said, a new system is soon to be introduced, so class teachers have fuller and direct access to tracking information themselves. Planning is thorough and based on a well-thought out curriculum that meets the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in the mixed-age classes. This often entails creative, cross-curricular opportunities, including themed days and weeks, enriched by outings and visits that heighten pupils' enjoyment and interest, contributing well to their concentration and learning. Pupils themselves appreciate this aspect, explaining their conviction that their teachers always try to make lessons interesting for them. Teachers possess good skills of questioning and ongoing assessment, varying the pace of their teaching accordingly, based on pupils' responses and reactions to match pupils' requirements further. As a result, pupils progress and achieve well.

Teachers and teaching assistants alike use resources well and their good knowledge of pupils in their classes results in differing requirements being met effectively.

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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Adults take good care of pupils with advice and reassurance when required. Links with secondary schools to establish smooth transfer procedures are in place. For example, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are catered for well. The staff’s willingness to seek partnerships and advice from agencies on how to best meet the needs of vulnerable pupils means that they are well supported.

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
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 interim headteacher demonstrates much accuracy in monitoring the work of the school. She uses the information gained to ensure that teaching is good, and reflects pupils’ needs, following on from improvements that had already been made. The staff show considerable willingness in responding to her leadership, while developing their own management skills. Ambition is clear at these middle levels of management with subject leaders’ using criteria to gain ArtsMark and Eco awards to ensure further improvements in the curriculum to drive learning and progress further. A particularly telling example is how meeting criteria as an International School is increasing global links to promote community cohesion from good to outstanding. The school is involved considerably in local events and pupils are taught effectively about the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom. Similarly, good policies and monitoring are in place to ensure that barriers to learning are tackled for individuals and groups. As a result, equality of opportunity is good. The governors are both supportive and questioning in their approach. They, too, have been instrumental in ensuring that systems are more robust in embedding the school’s improvement, so any possible difficulties in recruiting senior leaders in the future do not endanger it. All statutory requirements for safeguarding and child protection are met, although policies and paperwork do not fully reflect the quality of practice, despite a programme of continuous review.

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	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

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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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
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

Much emphasis is placed on helping children to settle quickly when they first arrive. Success is evident based on good initial contact with families. Reception aged children are currently taught together with those in Year 1, so the older children act as role models who already know the routines. As a result, children grow quickly in confidence and become very willing to show adults the results of their play and activities. At the same time, pupils in Year 1 benefit from a smooth transition from the Foundation Stage curriculum to the more advanced skills of the National Curriculum. Independence and self-reliance are encouraged well. Provision is of good quality and in some respects outstanding. For example, the outside area is very well resourced for all areas of learning, including shelter when needed. Its setting provides remarkable views of open countryside enabling opportunities for observation of wildlife, the development of associated language and artwork. The staff are very aware of this and plan accordingly to good effect. Indeed, planning is a particularly strong feature leading to children’s good learning and development.

In a very good session based on the story ‘Handa’s Surprise’, a parcel arrived containing examples of fruit that the animals might have eaten from Handa’s basket and a letter from Handa. This innovative approach excited the children and encouraged much emerging writing of a high standard. Children enter with a wide range of previous experiences and skills. However, this good provision ensures that they progress well across all areas of learning whatever their starting points and a good number reach age related goals by Year 1. Other outcomes, including attitudes towards, and knowledge about, health, keeping safe and working well with others are also good. This good picture happens because coordination and leadership of provision for the age group is good. The adults work well together as a team to the benefit of the children, adapting the curriculum, so it is enjoyable. Resources are well maintained, although it is not always clear how they are arranged around the room to support particular areas of learning when children themselves choose what to use. Records to keep track of children’s accomplishments and to plan next steps are thorough and meticulously up to date.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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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

The majority of parents and carers feel that the school is doing well for their children. Nearly all those met by an inspector felt that it is improving. However, there is continuing concern about instability in leadership and management. Nonetheless, inspectors found that the governing body and local authority are well aware of this matter and have good ideas for dealing with it in the future. Many parents and carers also strongly agree that the quality of teaching is good and express considerable satisfaction with the open approach of the interim headteacher. A large majority feel that their children enjoy school and those pupils asked by inspectors all agreed that this is the case.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Spratton Church of England 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 63 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	56	12	35	2	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	56	14	41	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	29	18	53	1	3	2	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	50	10	29	1	3	2	6
The teaching is good at this school	22	65	6	18	5	15	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	41	14	41	4	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	41	16	47	2	6	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)	17	50	10	29	2	6	2	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	50	12	35	4	12	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	26	18	53	3	10	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	32	17	50	5	15	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	24	15	44	2	6	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	19	56	9	26	5	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 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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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. 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.



16 June 2010

Dear Children

**Inspection of Spratton Church of England Primary School, Northampton
NN6 8HY**

Thank you for being so friendly when my colleague and I inspected your school. You helped enormously to make the two days go smoothly. I enjoyed speaking to you and visiting your lessons. It is great that so many of you told me that you enjoy school a lot. I also enjoyed speaking to you, especially the school councillors and those of you whom I met in the playground at lunchtime. All of the children to whom I spoke thought that Spratton Primary is a good school. I agree with them.

Some important things that the inspection found out are listed below.

- Your teachers teach and care for you well all the time.
- You learn effectively and make good progress.
- You behave well.
- You know a lot about how to stay safe and eat healthily.
- You show strong willingness to do jobs that help your teachers and to cooperate with each other, and you also contribute well to local events such as the Scarecrow Festival.
- Your achievement is good.
- Your staff and governors have good ideas about how to improve your school even more.

Here are two things to help improve your school further.

- We have asked the staff and governors to show you how to improve your writing even more.
- I should like all the staff to know as much as the headteacher about all the good information stored on the computer about your progress.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and by working towards improving your writing.

Yours sincerely

John W. Paull
Lead inspector

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