

Stoke St Michael Primary School

Moonshill Road, Stoke St Michael, Radstock, Somerset BA3 5LG

Inspection dates

25–26 April 2017

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
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| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| Early years provision | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes, the quality of teaching and leadership and management have declined since the last inspection.
- Leaders' monitoring lacks urgency. They do not follow up effectively to check that teaching is improving rapidly as a result of their plans and actions.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across the school. Developments in the quality of teaching have sometimes been slow to take hold.
- Over time, the progress of many pupils in the school has been too slow. For too long this was not identified by leaders. However, pupils are now making stronger progress and catching up on lost learning. Leaders' recent actions are raising teachers' expectations of pupils.
- Recent assessment information provides a more detailed picture for leaders and governors of pupils' current progress. However, this information is not used well enough to help pupils make more rapid progress.
- The standard of pupils' handwriting and presentation is poor and varies considerably across the school.
- Pupils are sometimes unsure of what they need to do to improve their work, particularly in writing.
- Staff in the pre-school and Reception do not share and improve their practice together, which slows children's progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The curriculum contributes particularly well to pupils' behaviour, personal well-being, social and moral development. It also gives pupils a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils read fluently and with evident enjoyment. Pupils use their knowledge of phonics to tackle unfamiliar words.
- Pupils feel very safe at school. They are very clear they have adults whom they trust and who will help them. Their parents strongly agree.
- Pupils behave well at school. They enjoy their learning and show respect for adults and each other.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - making sure assessment information is used accurately to identify actions which will accelerate pupils' progress
 - ensuring that pupils receive clear guidance on how to improve their work further so that more of them can achieve well, particularly in writing.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders provide clear and incisive feedback to teachers and follow it up swiftly in their monitoring of teaching and learning to make sure areas for improvement are acted on
 - evaluating clearly the impact of actions and interventions put in place to improve pupils' progress
 - ensuring that actions identified in the school's development plan are precisely linked to their impact on improvements to pupils' progress and can be readily evaluated by governors.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils, including of their handwriting and the presentation of their work
 - ensuring that adults in pre-school and Reception work together to improve the progress for children across the early years age range.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, leaders' actions have not brought about improvements to the quality of teaching, early years or pupils' progress to ensure that the quality of education at the school is good. Feedback by leaders to teachers to help them improve their work is not having the desired impact.
- At times, leaders do not check carefully enough that the points for development they have identified through their monitoring are happening in the classroom. This means that improvements in teachers' practice have been too slow and pupils' progress has suffered.
- Leaders, including governors, have a generally realistic view of the school's overall effectiveness. The school's development planning includes success criteria but it lacks clarity about actual evaluation of the impact of actions taken. This is because it is not clear for governors, and others, what the impact of actions on pupils' progress is expected to be.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group is very small. Scrutiny of their work shows that their current progress is improving and catching up with their peers as a result of improved teaching. Governors use the additional funding for these pupils appropriately. However, governors and leaders have not ensured that the school meets requirements on the publication of information about the pupil premium on its website.
- The school's assessment system is providing a more accurate picture of pupils' progress. However, this information is not used well enough by leaders and governors to improve pupils' progress, or to monitor whether actions put in place to improve pupils' progress are working successfully.
- Leaders' recent actions are proving more successful and raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of. The quality of teaching is therefore beginning to improve. However, it is not yet consistently good so that pupils achieve well.
- The leader with responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is using the additional funding effectively to make sure that the needs of these pupils are met. Good use of the advice of external agencies ensures that pupils receive the support they need. Monitoring of classroom practice and follow-up support for teachers help meet the needs of these pupils. As a result, the progress of current pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is improving from their different starting points.
- The physical education and sport premium is used effectively to increase pupils' sporting experiences. After-school sports clubs, in which pupils have a voice in deciding the range of sports offered, are subscribed to well. More pupils from different year groups are taking part in competitive sporting events such as the multi-sports event in which Year 3 and Year 4 pupils took part during the inspection.
- The curriculum provides opportunities to study and use the local environment well. Pupils have opportunities to experience sporting, musical and artistic learning, sometimes with pupils in their partner federation school and others, for example in recent cross-school art events. The curriculum promotes the development of pupils'

social and moral well-being well and provides them with a range of opportunities to learn how to manage risk and keep themselves safe, for example online and in the natural environment.

- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and those spoken with at the time of the inspection were positive about the education their children receive at the school. They also value the family, community feel of the school, and are clear that staff will listen to any concerns they may have. A large majority would recommend the school to another parent.

Governance of the school

- Governors' actions have not secured a good quality of education for pupils at the school.
- Governors do not routinely use the information provided for them to rigorously check on the pace of improvement to teaching, leadership and pupils' achievement.
- More recently, governors' challenge to school leaders has improved by asking more probing questions of the information they have been given. They are increasingly challenging the headteacher, especially after the results in 2016. However, governors' actions over time have not been robust or effective enough to bring about the improvement necessary.
- Safeguarding is central to the work of the governing body. Safeguarding training, including that on preventing radicalisation and extremism, is up to date. Governors monitor the school's work to keep pupils safe, for example in the recent comprehensive audit of the single central record by governors.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All involved in the school community are committed to keeping pupils safe. Information on the school's website sets out the school's ethos and makes it clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. The necessary checks to confirm the suitability of those who wish to work with children are detailed and thorough. Training for safeguarding, child protection and first aid is up to date, regular and welcomed, enabling staff and governors to fully discharge their duties. Staff have a good understanding of what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. New staff receive a thorough induction which emphasises the culture of safeguarding and equality that the school promotes.
- The school works well with outside agencies to support pupils and their families. Leaders challenge other professionals to ensure safe outcomes for pupils.
- Pupils and their parents are in strong agreement that pupils feel safe and are safe at this school. Pupils are knowledgeable about matters of safety through activities planned in the curriculum. Leaders and governors have effective plans in place to further improve aspects of site security.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, while improving, is not yet consistently good across the school.
- Teachers' expectations of what many pupils can achieve over time are not high enough. For example, pupils are accustomed to presenting work poorly and to taking too little care with their handwriting. As a result, pupils' progress in writing, and sometimes mathematics, is not as strong as it could be.
- Regular reviews of pupils' progress take place between teachers and leaders. However, teachers and leaders do not make best use of the assessment information to put in place actions to improve the progress of pupils who are underachieving.
- The guidance that teachers give to pupils does not always make it clear to them how to make their work better. This hinders their progress and is particularly the case for the most able pupils, who are sometimes unclear how to improve their work so that they can achieve the highest standards.
- Over time, teachers' accuracy and use of assessment information has not been good enough to ensure that activities planned build on pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding well. The accuracy of teachers' assessment is now improving as a result of professional development, including moderation with colleagues in other schools.
- Where assessment practice is strongest, teachers plan well for the wide range of needs in their mixed-age classes. For example, in the Reception Year, the new assessment system clearly identifies the next steps in children's learning. As a result, tasks are matched well to children's learning needs and they are making much stronger progress than was previously the case.
- Examination of pupils' work demonstrates that activities planned enable pupils to use their English and mathematics skills across the curriculum. However, teachers draw little attention to the quality of the English and mathematics skills that pupils use in other subjects, or to pupils' developing knowledge, skills and understanding in different subjects.
- Work to help pupils advance their reasoning in mathematics is developing. For example, in a Year 6 session, pupils found the proportions of different-coloured bottle tops as percentages, helping them equate percentages and fractions. However, pupils are not always challenged in this way to articulate their thinking in speech or in writing. This means that the development of their reasoning and deeper conceptual understanding is not as secure as it could be.
- Pupils are excited by their learning when they are fully involved in making decisions about what they might learn, particularly in key stage 2. For example, they enjoy making use of the school's grounds in a survival skills project as part of a topic on the Stone Age.
- Additional adults in the classrooms support learning effectively, striking a delicate balance between helping pupils and encouraging them to solve problems for themselves.

- Strong relationships between adults and pupils exist throughout the school. This leads to a positive culture for learning. Many enjoy challenging themselves to do better in their work, despite not knowing precisely what would help them to improve.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, enjoying the activities planned for them across the curriculum. For example, older pupils enjoy the challenges presented to them in English, mathematics and science and recognise where they are helping them to achieve their aspirations, such as to become a vet.
- The curriculum helps pupils to gain a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. For example, pupils across the school learn to manage risk through their involvement in learning how to keep safe in the natural environment.
- Pupils know what steps to take to help keep themselves safe online, such as when protecting their own identity. The school's work in this area has raised awareness for pupils and parents in how to stay safe when using a range of digital technologies.
- Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and culture development is promoted well. Pupils take an active role in school life, for example through their involvement in the planning of some curriculum topics. Pupils are confident that adults will listen to their views. They mentioned that when new teachers came they took the trouble to find out about the children and that, as a result, pupils 'felt they knew us from the start'.
- The school promotes British values well. Through their school council pupils see democracy and fairness in action. Recently, the school council oversaw the completion of a survey of views of school life, thus ensuring that even the youngest pupils could express their views about the school. Older pupils make use of an age-appropriate current affairs programme to provide a format for discussion of a wide range of issues including equality, diversity and differences in the modern world.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils of all ages behave well in lessons, at break and lunchtimes and as they move around the school. They are proud of their school and show respect and courtesy to adults and to each other. Older pupils take care of younger pupils and pupils of all ages play harmoniously together. Pupils say the school is 'like a family'.
- Pupils know the routines of school life well. They respond quickly to the instructions of adults around them. They value the rewards and celebrations of behaviour and achievement that are in place.
- Pupils feel that behaviour is good at school and their parents strongly agree. Pupils say that bullying is most uncommon at school and they are very confident there are adults they trust who will help them sort out any concerns. The majority of parents agree.

- Attendance at school is better than for pupils nationally. Few are persistently absent. The attendance of those who have been absent the most is improving.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- At both key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2016 the numbers of pupils reaching the expected standard for their age was below the national level in reading, writing and mathematics. Few pupils were working at the higher standard, or 'greater depth' at either key stage 1 or key stage 2.
- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected level of the national phonics check declined in 2016 to below the national average. By the end of Year 2 all pupils had reached this milestone. Pupils in Year 1 who did not reach a good level of development at the end of their early years can now make sound use of their phonics when reading.
- Pupils across the school enjoy reading and read with expression and fluency relative to their age and development. Older pupils in particular can talk with aptitude and appreciation about the texts they choose to read.
- The number of children who reach a good level of development at the end of the early years has been declining over time. However, observations of children's learning indicate that those who are currently in the Reception age group are on track to achieve well from their different starting points.
- The progress of current pupils has improved but is not yet consistently good across each year group. Pupils in Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6 in particular, including the most able, are making better progress. In Year 1 and Year 3 pupils are starting to catch up from last year's low levels of attainment.
- Disadvantaged pupils are few in number, being commonly one or two in a year group. In 2016, disadvantaged pupils did not make the same progress as other pupils nationally. However, in previous years their progress in reading, writing and mathematics was similar to the progress of other pupils nationally. The progress of disadvantaged pupils currently in the school is slowly improving from their varied starting points.
- The numbers of pupils who receive additional support for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. In 2016 they formed half the Year 6 cohort. Current pupils who receive additional support are making better progress than before. This is due to the actions of the new coordinator, including the closer monitoring of pupils' progress in the classroom, combined with other support for them and their families.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Historically, a lack of effective communication and sharing of skills between adults in the early years has hampered the progress that Reception children make. Given that not all children in the pre-school move into the school's Reception and a number join Reception from other providers, the lack of clear communication has prevented children getting off to the best start.

- The number of children reaching a good level of development in 2016 was well below national figures. However, current Reception children are making stronger progress from their different starting points. This includes the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Teachers have not made best use of assessment information to plan for children's next steps in learning. However, the introduction of new assessment processes means that teachers have a more accurate view of children's needs. They are now using this information to begin to plan appropriately for children's different learning needs.
- Parents can contribute to their child's assessment profile by talking with staff. As yet parents are not able to share their children's learning and development more frequently. The school is developing an online system of assessment that aims to strengthen this aspect of the school's work.
- As a result of professional development, and stronger assessment, teachers' planning is now better focused on the learning opportunities that early years children require. Consequently, Reception children are starting to make stronger progress this year. However, the better practice in planning to meet their learning needs is not yet embedded fully.
- Current children in Reception make good use of phonics to read unfamiliar words and to spell phonically plausible words in their writing.
- Across the early years provision safeguarding is effective. Parents are firmly of the view that their children are kept safe and looked after well.
- The leadership of the early years has recently been strengthened by the appointment of a highly experienced practitioner in the pre-school. Recent actions and plans for improvement indicate the potential for early years practice to be developed further and to improve outcomes for all early years children.
- Children across the early years behave well. They are keen to learn and share their enjoyment with each other and the adults who help them.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 123662 |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Inspection number | 10032519 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 53 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Rachel Summerhayes |
| Headteacher | Stephen Heath |
| Telephone number | 01749 840470 |
| Website | www.stokestmichaelprimary.org |
| Email address | office@stoke-st-michael.somerset.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 28–29 November 2012 |

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the pupil premium on its website.
- Stoke St Michael Primary School is much smaller than the average primary school. Numbers in each year group vary between five and nine pupils. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. Reception children are taught in a mixed Reception and key stage 1 class.
- There is a pre-school on the site which is managed by the governing body and it formed part of this inspection. Some children start their education in the pre-school, then transfer into the Reception and key stage 1 class for Reception.
- Since its last inspection, the school has been federated with Croscombe Church of England Primary School. An executive headteacher leads, and a single governing body serves, both schools. Croscombe was not inspected as part of this inspection.

- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and no pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- The number of pupils supported by the funding for the pupil premium is similar to the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Pupils' learning was observed in 11 sessions or part sessions, many jointly with the headteacher. A learning walk took place with the senior teacher. The work of pupils in all year groups was scrutinised. The inspector talked with pupils about their work during lessons and informally at breaktimes and around the school. The inspector listened to pupils read and met with pupils to gather views about their experiences of school.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and senior teacher, governors and a representative of the local education authority.
- The inspector took account of the 11 responses to Parent View and considered the 11 comments received. Discussions were held with a number of parents at the start of the school day.
- A range of documentation was considered, including information on pupils' attainment and progress, the school's improvement planning, records of the monitoring of teaching and information on the management of teachers' performance. Procedures for the safeguarding of pupils, including information relating to attendance, behaviour and the exclusion of pupils, were examined.

Inspection team

Sarah O'Donnell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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