



Dronfield Stonelow Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112698
Local Authority DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number 289376
Inspection date 25 September 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Martin Newell

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Stonelow Road
School category	Community		Dronfield
Age range of pupils	7-11		Dronfield S18 2EP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01246414370
Number on roll (school)	145	Fax number	01246414370
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr.M Green
		Headteacher	Mrs. Alison Perkins
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector in a one day visit.

Description of the school

This is an average sized junior school serving the Dronfield area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals and of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below the national average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is a little above the national average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and none are at an early stage of acquiring English.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that has a very clear grasp of what is needed to improve further. The strong leadership of the headteacher is focused on providing high quality of education where all pupils, whatever their ability or ethnicity, achieve well. The school's judgement of its own effectiveness is fully endorsed by the inspection findings; it provides good value for money. Attainment when pupils start at the school is a little above average. By the time that pupils leave school, standards are consistently well above average in English, mathematics and science. This clearly paints an overall picture of good achievement but data shows that progress for the Year 5 and 6 pupils is often better than this and some Year 3 and 4 pupils do not always make as good progress as others in these year groups. The quality of teaching makes a telling contribution to pupils' achievement, and learning is accelerated when expectations are high, tasks are very well matched to pupils' abilities and the pace of lessons never drops. However, occasionally, expectations for some pupils are not as high so that progress does not match that of the best lessons. The good procedures that are in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and for setting challenging targets are used well to address any underachievement. The school goes out of its way to provide a rich and varied number of after school clubs together with an array of visits and visitors that enthuse pupils and bring another dimension to their learning and social experiences. Pupils make a good contribution to the life of the school through their good behaviour, respect for one another and for staff, regular attendance and readiness to carry out jobs and tasks. Their awareness of what is needed to keep fit, safe and healthy is particularly good and they recognise the importance of contributing to the wider community. Pupils are less confident at taking initiative for their own learning and their knowledge of the wider world of work is at an early awareness level. The care and welfare of pupils is high on the school's list of priorities. Pupils feel safe and secure and believe that their views are not only listened to but are also valued and respected. All staff work hard at building up pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well and has played a pivotal role in setting the school an agenda geared towards moving it on to its next level of development. She tackles identified issues rigorously and professionally. The school enjoys very good support from many parents and as one stated, 'This is a school where the child comes first.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the progress of some Year 3 and 4 pupils to match the good progress of other pupils in these year groups. - Ensure that pupils play a bigger part in their own learning and target setting and engage more actively in innovative and exciting enterprise activities to extend their knowledge of the world of work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are well above average. The school's efforts in raising writing standards are proving successful because of well thought out and innovative initiatives. The 2006 test results in writing show a significant improvement from results in 2005. Whilst the picture that emerges is one of good achievement and progress in English, mathematics and science, evidence and data indicates that it is very good in Years 5 and 6 and good overall in Years 3 and 4 but better in some classes than others. The school is tackling this issue well through setting challenging targets based on an accurate assessment of how well pupils are doing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils behave well in class and around the school and are always ready to show respect to staff and one another. They enjoy school and attendance rates are above the national average. Pupils talk particularly enthusiastically about visits, visitors to school and after school clubs, which they feel make learning more fun. However, pupils are sometimes a little passive in class and need prompting to take responsibility and initiative for their own learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good as pupils are reflective, genuinely look out for one another and have a good awareness of cultures other than their own.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Good use is made of computers and interactive whiteboards which helps to bring learning to life. Teaching assistants play an influential role in enhancing pupils' achievement by giving effective support in lessons. Teaching is at its best when lessons are packed with pace and challenge, as in lessons for Year 6 pupils. In the main, pupils are left under no illusion as to what is expected of them and every learning opportunity is seized to extend pupils' understanding. However, for some Year 3 and 4 pupils, progress is not as good as it could be because expectations are not high enough. Pupils are assessed regularly and their progress is reviewed with good systems for identifying and tackling any underachievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good because it brings a wide and effective range of learning experiences for pupils. Good provision is made to ensure that pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills are developed well and put to effective use in other subjects. The

very good array of after school clubs, visits and visitors, residential trips, opportunities to play musical instruments and learn a modern foreign language are examples of the school 'going the extra mile' to make learning fun and enjoyable. Good support is on hand for pupils with learning difficulties that enables them to take an active part in all that the school offers, although, on a few occasions, provision for the most able pupils lacks challenge. The school's strong commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles shines through, and its readiness to contribute to local community events and happenings strengthens further pupils' personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a caring school where the welfare of pupils is afforded a high priority. Very rigorous procedures are in place for safeguarding pupils; child protection, health and safety, and risk assessment procedures are well known and adhered to by all staff. Strong links have been established with outside agencies to ensure that support for vulnerable pupils is always available if needed. The well established school council gives pupils a genuine voice in school and they have contributed much to improvements such as playground facilities and the school library. Pupils feel safe, and are adamant that, 'Bullying is not a problem at our school'. Pupils' academic progress is tracked well but pupils do not yet play an active enough role in setting and reviewing any targets for themselves.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. She has a strong grasp of the school's strengths and tackles identified weaknesses in a rigorous and professional manner so that improvements in the school's performance follow. A particular strength is the honest, frank and accurate school self-evaluation. The rigorous monitoring of teaching and analyses of test data, mainly by the headteacher, have led to improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement. The newly appointed deputy headteacher is set to play an influential role in tackling weaknesses and monitoring the school's performance and the school's capacity for further improvement is good. Governors are very supportive of the school and whilst their roles and impact are improving well, they are not yet all as effective as the chair of governors in monitoring the work of the school.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 September 2006 Dear Children Dronfield Stonelow Junior School, Stonelow Road, Dronfield, Derbyshire, S18 2EP You may remember that I came to visit your school not too long ago and I am now writing to let you know what I found out. Before I do, I would just like to say a big thank you to all of you for making my visit so enjoyable. As I walked around the school and classrooms many of you were helpful and polite and I was often greeted with a big beaming smile. I had the opportunity to talk to the school council and some Year 6 pupils and it was good to hear how much you enjoyed the after school clubs, the visits and visitors to school and in particular the residential trips you go on. These children told me that you had a voice that was listened to in school and that bullying was not an issue at your school. This was good to hear. Having visited your school, I can tell you that it is a good school. There are many good things including how teachers try to make learning enjoyable to help you achieve well; the wide range of trips and after school clubs; the way that the school helps you to keep fit, safe and healthy; how well you are looked after in school and how well Mrs Perkins manages the school. I was also impressed by your good behaviour, your readiness to do jobs around the school and the respect you show for one another and for the staff. I have talked to your teachers about how they can help make the school even better. Teachers are going to make sure that the progress you make is always good and that more opportunities are provided for you to play a bigger role in how well you learn. Mrs Perkins and all the staff want the school to continue to improve. Having met you I am sure you will want to play your part as well. I wish you every success in your futures. It was a pleasure to meet you. Martin Newell Lead Inspector