

# Stiperstones CofE Primary School

Snailbeach, Shrewsbury, SY5 0LZ

**Inspection dates** 19–20 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The site headteacher is an effective leader who has overseen significant improvements since the last inspection.
- The partnership with Chirbury School has led to strengthened community confidence, better training for staff, more exciting work for the pupils and better checking of their progress.
- Leaders, managers and governors ensure that teaching and learning are good across the school.
- Good behaviour across the school is a significant factor in the good and sometimes outstanding progress made in most lessons.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and teach lessons in which they learn well.
- Pupils enjoy exciting activities and experiences throughout the year, including visits and residential stays.
- The youngest children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of good teaching and the high quality of care.
- The school has a good awareness of how well it is doing and what it needs to improve, supported by enthusiastic staff and pupils.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The progress made by individual pupils is checked carefully in reading and writing but not yet in mathematics, where attainment is not as high.
- Just occasionally, teachers do not provide work at the right level for all pupils in the mixed-age classes.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, the senior headteacher from the federation, members of staff with curricular responsibility, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils.
- Account was taken of the 10 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Clive Lewis, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Stiperstones is much smaller than most other primary schools.
- In January 2012, faced with possible closure, the school formed a 'hard federation' with another local small school by amalgamating the two governing bodies. It is now part of the 'Chirbury and Stiperstones CE Primary School Federation'.
- The federation is seen as a positive means of preserving education within the local community and may incorporate further small schools in future years.
- The headteacher was acting headteacher of the school for two years before becoming substantive site headteacher in January 2012.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported at 'school action' is above the national average, and high in some year groups.
- The proportion of pupils at 'school action plus' or with a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- A high proportion of pupils join or leave partway through their primary school education.
- Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes: one for Reception children and pupils Years 1 and 2, and another for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- There is an on-site pre-school, but it is not managed by the federation's governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement in mathematics, by introducing individual pupil targets for mathematics.
- Improve the quality of all teaching to the level of the best, by ensuring teachers consistently provide suitably challenging work for all pupils in the mixed-age classes.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment on entry to the school varies considerably from year to year but is broadly typical for this age group.
- The very small year groups, the high proportion of pupils joining late and the high numbers of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs in some years make comparisons between key stages and year groups less meaningful than in larger schools.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in all the areas of learning. Planning, teaching and resources for both indoor and outdoor learning are good. Children usually reach at least average standards on entry to Year 1.
- Pupils across the range of year groups and abilities achieve well in Key Stages 1 and 2. Work in pupils' books and the quality of learning in lessons seen during the inspection confirm this good progress across the school
- In recent years, the school's results in the Year 6 national tests have been consistently above average. School data and pupils' work seen during the inspection confirm that in the current Year 6, attainment is again above average. However, attainment in mathematics was not as high as in reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. The good support provided by class teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies ensures that work is well matched to their needs and they take small but progressive steps in learning.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium make equally good progress. Pupils who join the school during the year, or in different year groups, benefit from good individual support so they quickly catch up with their classmates.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils, parents and carers rightly say that teaching is good. Despite some minor inconsistencies, good teaching typically leads to good progress across the school.
- In most lessons, tasks that are closely matched to ability levels enable pupils of all backgrounds to make good progress. In a small minority of cases, particularly in the introduction to lessons, teachers do not ensure appropriate challenge for all groups and abilities.
- In a well-taught literacy lesson focusing on planning a recount of an event, the teacher set a very good pace and changed activities frequently. This motivated and inspired pupils very effectively so that behaviour was outstanding throughout.
- Teachers' good classroom management skills ensure that pupils work well together. Strategies for managing the behaviour of pupils are very effective so that lessons are calm and purposeful, time is not wasted and pupils work hard throughout.
- There is a strong whole-school focus on the teaching of phonics (pupils linking letters to the sounds they make as they read and write). Daily 'Letters and Sounds' activities and regular guided reading activities for all age groups further encourage the development of pupils' higher-order reading skills.

- Teachers have benefited greatly from opportunities for joint moderation of pupils' work with colleagues from their partner school. As a result, moderation skills have improved across the federation.
- Teachers ensure that in most lessons and subjects, imaginative activities engage and excite pupils' interest. This promotes pupils' confidence and enjoyment in learning, as well as their spiritual and cultural development.
- The recently introduced assessment and tracking system provides secure data on pupils' progress as they move through the school. Pupils now have individual targets for their reading and writing skills, although not yet individual targets for mathematics.
- Pupils who need extra help are supported well and those who find learning easy are given more challenging tasks. This helps all pupils to learn successfully. However, in a small minority of the lessons observed, learning and progress were held back because pupils of widely varying age and ability were all engaged in the same activity.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Behaviour is good and occasionally outstanding. This is a major factor in the good progress pupils make in most lessons.
- The school has an effective system of rewards and sanctions, and parents and carers are fully confident that any poor behaviour is dealt with effectively and promptly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe, and say they are confident that any issues they raise with the school will be dealt with promptly.
- Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and this is demonstrated in their impressive attendance record. Pupils in Year 6 stated that they will be sorry to leave the school in the summer.
- Behaviour is typically good in lessons and around the school. Pupils confirm that behaviour is usually 'really good' and understand that 'the little arguments in the playground aren't really bullying'. They say learning is fun and they are enthusiastic about their learning and their reading. They understand the need for healthy lifestyles and exercise.
- Pupils relate well to each other, and are courteous and polite to visitors. They display high levels of concentration, and when working in pairs or groups they organise themselves swiftly and without fuss. Pupils show respect for the feelings and beliefs of others.
- Pupils have a good range of opportunities to contribute to the school and wider communities. They willingly take on responsibility and play a constructive role in the school.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The site headteacher of Stiperstones, working in close collaboration with the senior headteacher for the federation, provides very clear educational direction, based firmly on a rigorous analysis of pupils' progress and an accurate evaluation of the school's work.
- Issues from the previous inspection have been tackled successfully. The quality of writing has improved across the school, and pupils have a good range of opportunities to use their literacy

and computer skills across the curriculum.

- Regular performance management has been introduced for all staff, with training opportunities closely linked to the school development plan. Strategies to improve the quality of teaching have proved successful in sharing good practice and achieving a good level of consistency in planning, although some minor inconsistencies remain.
- Local authority support is helpful to the school. For example, joint lesson monitoring and support has been effective in improving the quality of teaching and progress. The school is correctly judged to require only a low level of challenge and support.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school. It has excellent links with its local community, hosting regular events such as 'Community Café' and farmers' markets in the school.
- The curriculum includes a good balance of interesting activities. A benefit of the federation is that children from both schools now go on school trips and residential visits together. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result, the promotion of equality of opportunity is good.
- Good care, guidance and support ensure that all pupils are able to learn and develop confidence, regardless of their individual circumstances. Pupils learn to reflect and appreciate their own skills and the skills of others. This reflective approach, together with collaborative work, is very successful in increasing pupils' confidence and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The school runs very smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The positive track record of improvement since the last inspection, the new partnership with Chirbury Primary and the federation's ambition for continued improvement underpin a strong capacity for further improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - provides strong support and challenge for leaders and managers of both schools
  - ensures that safeguarding procedures meet national requirements, that staff training in child protection is kept fully up to date, and that policies are regularly reviewed
  - plays an active part in the school's self-evaluation, monitoring and improvement planning processes.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123519
<b>Local authority</b>	Shropshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	402814

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	30
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Heather Kidd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Cooke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 May 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01743 791207
<b>Fax number</b>	01743 791207
<b>Email address</b>	admin.stiperstones@shropshirelg.net

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