

St Stephen's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106246
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	355914
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2010
Reporting inspector	John Heap

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Roger Dixon
Headteacher	Mrs Cathie Masztalerz
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twelve lessons were observed and these were taught by nine teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at: self-evaluation documents; the school improvement plan; school policies, including those to do with safeguarding pupils; reports from the local authority; and teachers' planning. The number of parental questionnaires returned totalled 107.

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

- How well pupils achieved in Key Stage 2, particularly in English and mathematics, to determine whether teaching was sufficiently challenging.
- Whether the various ability groups in the school were making enough progress.
- Whether there was sufficient evidence to support the school's assessments of 'outstanding' care and guidance and a 'good' curriculum.
- How well the school promotes the use and development of basic skills throughout the curriculum.
- Whether monitoring and evaluation practices are sufficiently robust to ensure the school's priorities are measured against accurate and sharp success criteria.

Information about the school

This smaller than average primary school serves a community where most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. In addition, there are small groups of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and there are none with a statement of special educational needs. The school provides for a small number of pupils who are at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language, including a very small minority of refugees. A very small number of pupils are in the care of the local authority. The school has achieved Healthy School status.

The headteacher took up the post in September 2010.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school that provides sound value for money. The strengths of the school include: the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the extensive provision that supports these pupils; pupils' strong knowledge and understanding of the importance of healthy and safe lifestyles; the effective contribution pupils make to the school and wider community and their strong spiritual, moral and social development.

Attainment is broadly average by the end of Key Stage 2, with outcomes in English being better than those in mathematics. This is largely due to higher scores in reading. In national tests, there are some variations over time but the current data shows the pupils to be on track to achieve their targets. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning owing to the sound teaching and curriculum. Across the year groups the rate of progress is inconsistent. The school recognises that pupils would make gains more quickly if there is more good teaching and assessment information and marking are used more consistently and rigorously to challenge pupils. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and develop their basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in a wider range of subjects.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's learning, progress and achievement are all satisfactory. Children learn best during adult-led activities because staff make the learning fun and challenging. Progress sometimes stalls when they choose their own activities because staff are less skilful at timing their interventions. The outdoor area is not resourced, or used, well enough.

In a short period the headteacher has developed a clear and accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She has introduced new procedures for monitoring and evaluation and begun the task of developing staff skills and their understanding of their responsibilities. These procedures, tasks and understanding are just being embedded and it is too soon to measure their impact. Currently, governors and middle managers have less well-developed monitoring and evaluation skills and too few opportunities to rigorously check and judge the outcomes and provision in the school. Consequently, the capacity to improve is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress in English and mathematics by:
- – improving the proportion of good learning and teaching, especially ensuring lessons are sufficiently challenging

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- – providing many more opportunities for pupils to use and develop their basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects
- – ensuring the consistent use of assessment information to raise expectations and challenge for all pupils.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - – demanding greater rigour in all aspects of monitoring and evaluation
 - – enhancing the leadership skills of middle managers so that they can take a full part in improving the school
 - – enabling governors to take a greater, and more independent, role in monitoring and evaluation and setting the strategic direction for the school.
- Improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - – ensuring adults successfully intervene to fully challenge children who are engaged in independent learning activities
 - – ensuring that the outdoor area is used more to extend learning and has sufficient resources available to promote all areas of the curriculum.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In most of the lessons observed, pupils made satisfactory progress and the rate of progress was inconsistent across the classes. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners when the lesson is taught well and their interest is captured. Work in books shows that pupils react well to detailed marking that shows the pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do next. Pupils are soundly prepared for the next stage in their education.

Attainment is broadly average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils make satisfactory, but uneven, progress as they move through the school. From starting school with skills that are broadly typical for their age overall achievement is satisfactory. The rate of progress is weakest in writing where pupils often show immature basic skills. The main reason for this is the lack of writing being done, particularly in other subjects. Number skills are average, but there is scope for pupils to do more investigative work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress because they receive strong support within the school. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and other small groups, including the looked after pupils, are making at least satisfactory progress towards their personal targets.

Moral and social development is good. Pupils are polite, friendly and sociable. They clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. They behave well at lunchtime, in the playground and in social events, such as the weekly 'sunshine assembly'. In the main, lessons are not disrupted by behavioural problems but pupils were seen to be distracted when they lost interest in what they were doing. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and the out-of-class activities, which are well attended. They also enjoy coming to school and attendance is average. They have a strong understanding of and involvement in their own

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culture and a sound knowledge of other cultures in Britain and around the world. Pupils have a good awareness of what foods and drinks are healthy and many enjoy a wide variety of physical activities in school and as extra activities. The school council makes an effective contribution to the school community by being a strong 'voice', for instance, in discussions about improving the playground and making charitable donations. Many older pupils successfully take responsibility for a range of jobs in the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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	3
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The majority of teaching observed was satisfactory. Common features included: good relationships; sensitive prompting by support staff; mostly clear learning objectives that are shared with pupils; good classroom organisation; and effective management of behaviour. In the best lessons, expectations of what pupils might achieve were appropriately high and practical activities challenged pupils' knowledge and understanding. Questioning from staff kept pupils on their toes and ensured a good pace to the lesson. These good teaching practices, however, are yet to be consistently well employed across the school. Recent adaptations have been made to the method of marking and using assessment but the quality is patchy. These changes are being inconsistently applied as teachers' skills are still developing. The activities provided are sometimes insufficiently challenging for moving learning along at a good rate and promoting pupils' interests.

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The main strengths of the curriculum are the good promotion of pupils' personal development and well-being and the effective way the curriculum is modified for pupils with extra learning needs. As a result pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good academic progress. Pupils participate eagerly in the many sporting activities, such as those done on a weekly basis with professional sports coaches. Less effective is the school's approach to using and developing basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects. For example, opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills, such as regularly writing creatively and at length both in literacy lessons and other subjects, remain too limited to impact significantly on accelerating progress.

Day-to-day pastoral care is good and pupils say they are confident that they know an adult they can turn to, if and when needed. Induction and transition arrangements are good. There are satisfactory links with other agencies, including the church, other local schools and external caring agencies. As a result pupils and their families are growing in self-confidence. Satisfactory systems to promote and monitor attendance arrangements, for example, are steadily improving and having greater impact.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The recently appointed headteacher has an accurate view of the school's effectiveness. She knows its strengths and has pinpointed necessary improvements that focus clearly on raising standards and accelerating progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. Improved procedures for tracking pupils' academic progress are helping to drive up standards by identifying more quickly where learning could speed up. These changes, however, are yet to have an impact on accelerating pupils' progress to a consistently good rate because the targets set for progress are not always sufficiently challenging. The governing body is satisfactory. Governors are committed and helpful. However, they are too reliant on the senior managers for the information that they receive. Nevertheless, they recognise that they must develop more independent monitoring skills and procedures so that they can make a more effective contribution to the evaluation of pupils' achievement and the quality of provision.

Partnerships with parents and carers are satisfactory and beginning to improve. In particular, the effective work to improve parents' and carers' understanding of how they can support their children's learning at home and also extend their own skills. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily and all pupils benefit equally from what the schools offers. However, leaders know, for instance, that there are inconsistencies in the

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use of procedures to evaluate fully the information on pupils' progress so that they can spot any variations in achievement. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory and pupils readily say that they feel safe and their parents agree. Although pupils demonstrate a great sensitivity and respect for the varying ethnic backgrounds within school the promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Stronger links are forged locally than further afield.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall, children get a satisfactory start in the Reception class. On entry to Reception, children's skills and abilities are broadly typical for their age, with lower attainment in communication, language and literacy development. Children make satisfactory progress and by the end of the Reception Year attainment is average. However, early writing skills are consistently lower than other areas of learning. Most children settle well, willingly follow routines and develop good relationships with their peers and adults. The majority of children enjoy being in school and they play well together. Behaviour is satisfactory because occasionally a minority of children are too boisterous and not managed rigorously enough by staff. In lessons, the best learning was observed when the activities were stimulating, exciting and attractive, such as the sessions where children were planting bulbs or role-playing in Penguin Small's House. In general, the quality of teaching and curriculum is satisfactory. The provision is stronger indoors because the resources are better and adults are much better at timing their interventions to have the biggest effect. The outdoor area is not used continuously and this holds back the development of independent learning skills. The satisfactory leadership and management have strengths in dealing with issues such as links with parents and carers and induction. Procedures to ensure a smooth induction are good, with strong links developed with parents and carers

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through home visits, 'golden book' and helpful guidance about the ways parents and carers can help their children to learn.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents, carers and pupils are mostly satisfied by the work that the school does and a typical parental comment is: 'St Stephen's looks after the children in its care very well and are not just interested in academics but in helping children grow into responsible members of society.' A very small minority of parents and carers were concerned about aspects of: bullying; behaviour management; supervision; and information for parents and carers. Inspection evidence shows that each of these areas was, at least, satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Stephen's CofE 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 107 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 187 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	58	43	40	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	65	37	35	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	54	50	50	47	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	44	52	49	7	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	54	50	50	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	54	50	45	42	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	39	61	57	2	2	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)	48	45	53	50	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	45	53	50	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	42	51	48	8	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	44	49	46	5	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	49	49	46	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	51	46	43	2	2	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



8 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Stephen's CE Primary School, Manchester M34 5HD

On behalf of the inspection team, I want to tell you that we thoroughly enjoyed being in your school last week. You generously gave us a warm welcome, treated us with courtesy and provided help and assistance when we needed it. You go to a satisfactory school.

What we particularly liked about your school:

- the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning, settle to work quickly and enjoy coming to school
- you and your parents and carers say that you enjoy school
- the good contribution that you make to the school council and helping with the jobs
- your moral and social development is strong and, because of this, you know right from wrong, behave sensibly and considerately, and have good relationships with adults and other children
- you know and understand the importance of remaining healthy and safe
- a good range of activities ensure that joining and leaving the school is not a painful experience
- leaders and managers in your school ensure that you are well cared for.

To improve your school further:

- the staff will ensure that you make quicker progress in English and mathematics. Please continue to always do your best work, but at a quicker pace. You will also find it interesting to use your writing, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in all the subjects that you do
- senior staff and governors will work even harder to check the work of the school and improve further the opportunities they provide for all the children in the school
- staff will also make sure that the work in Reception is truly challenging and that the outdoor areas are as well equipped as they can be.

Good luck for the future and, please, make sure that you continue to enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

John Heap

Lead inspector

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