

Stechford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103262
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	355348
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Marian Harker HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	242
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Ambler
Headteacher	Roger Rathbone
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 12 lessons taught by nine teachers, and held meetings with parents, groups of pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to self-evaluation, the tracking of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan and the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and analysed the responses of 42 parental questionnaires, in addition to those completed by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well do pupils achieve as they move through the school, particularly in writing, those who are of higher ability or those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- How effective is the school in improving the quality and consistency of teaching?
- How effective are leaders and managers at all levels in raising attainment and accelerating pupils' progress?

Information about the school

Stechford is an average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. Almost three quarters of pupils speak English as an additional language and just under a quarter of these are in the early stages of learning English. The main languages spoken, other than English, are Urdu and Punjabi. A large majority of pupils are from Pakistani families. Fewer pupils than average are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The majority of those identified have moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication needs or are on the autistic spectrum. There have been a number of important changes in teaching staff since the last inspection including the appointment of a new headteacher in November 2010.

The school has recently achieved a number of awards including Activemark, Travel Plan and Warwick University Mentoring Award.

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

Stechford is a good school that has consolidated its performance since the previous inspection. Parents are positive about the school and say such things as, 'My children are really happy in this school, the staff are supportive and I have no concerns at all.' All parents who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school kept their children safe. Pupils also report that they feel safe in school and are confident that their concerns and worries will be addressed swiftly. The quality of support, guidance and care provided for pupils and their families is a strength. The school works closely with parents and makes good use of external agencies to ensure that pupils with specific difficulties receive good quality support. Attendance is average as a small proportion of parents choose to take holidays in term time despite the best efforts of the school.

Pupils make good progress through the school as a result of the good teaching they receive. They join the school with starting points lower than expected for their age and progress well. Consequently, by the time they leave at the end of Year 6 they attain levels that are broadly in line with national averages. Results in writing have recently improved but remain below those of reading and mathematics. Pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress as well as their peers due to the good levels of attention paid to tailoring the curriculum to their needs. Teachers involve the pupils in interesting activities that encourage them to develop their curiosity about the world. However, opportunities to challenge the more-able pupils in lessons are sometimes missed. Pupils' work is regularly marked with positive comments. In the best examples, pupils are given clear guidance to enable them to improve their work.

The headteacher provides dedicated leadership. In a relatively short period of time he has developed a good team spirit with a common purpose amongst the staff. Self-evaluation is accurate and school improvement planning is robust. However, improvement planning does not identify specific and measurable milestones that will enable senior leaders and governors to check progress easily. Members of the governing body are supportive, they know the school community very well and have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The improvements in tracking and assessment since the previous inspection, rising attainment and accelerating progress alongside accurate self-evaluation indicate that the school is well placed to continue to improve in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards, particularly in writing by:
- increasing the opportunities for writing across the curriculum
- moving pupils on to tasks sooner in lessons so that they have more time to complete these and consolidate their learning

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- ensuring that higher-ability pupils are sufficiently challenged, so they can achieve as well as they can.
- Ensure that school improvement planning identifies appropriate measurable milestones and clear lines of accountability to support senior staff and governors in their monitoring and evaluation.

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

Children enter the nursery class with skills below those expected for this age, particularly in their personal development, speaking and listening and early reading and writing skills. They make good progress as they move through the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of good and sometimes outstanding teaching. There has been an upward trend in attainment since the previous inspection and by the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils generally attain in line with national averages. The school's most recent data show that progress and attainment in writing is improving and a greater proportion of pupils are on track to reach the expected levels across the school. Thorough tracking systems ensure that all teachers are aware of any differences in performance between different groups of pupils. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls or those at the early stages of learning English. The very small minority of pupils not from Pakistani heritage make similar progress to their peers.

Pupils apply themselves well in lessons, working happily individually, in pairs or groups. In a literacy lesson in Year 3, for example, pupils worked together to develop their writing by planning a book review. In the large majority of lessons observed, pupils made good progress in their work due to good teaching. In Year 6, pupils applied themselves well to the challenging task of ordering a series of fractions by finding a common denominator. Behaviour in lessons and around school is good, routines are well established and respected by pupils. Occasionally, pupils' concentration dips in lessons when teachers talk for too long. In some lessons observed, learning was slower when pupils did not have sufficient time to complete tasks or those of higher ability were not suitably challenged.

Pupils' contribution to the school and local community is good with an active school council, which leads fundraising events. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. During the inspection pupils played safely outside at break times showing a good understanding of the potential dangers of the building work taking place at the school. The large majority of pupils eagerly participate in Wake Up, Shake Up sessions prior to the start of the school day. This is having a positive impact not only on improving rates of punctuality, but improving the mental and physical well-being of pupils. Pupils' good relationships with others, together with rising academic standards help them to be well prepared for their future.

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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

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?

Lessons are consistently well planned using up-to-date assessment information. Introductions are often lively and teachers use strategies such as talk partners to involve all pupils. Teachers routinely share learning intentions and as a result, pupils know what they are meant to learn. On occasion teacher's expectations of what higher-ability pupils can achieve in a lesson are too low. Although work is interesting, teachers sometimes talk too much in lessons and this does not leave sufficient time for pupils to complete their work and consolidate their learning. Most teachers use questioning effectively to assess pupils' understanding during the lesson. Pupils have individual targets that help them to improve key skills.

The curriculum is carefully designed to meet the needs and aspirations of Stechford pupils. In particular, good provision is made for the development of basic skills and learning is developed around curricular themes. However, the school does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills by using these in subjects across the curriculum. Lessons in the classroom are enhanced by thoughtful off-site visits and residential trips. Pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 are given the opportunity to visit World War One battlefield sites on the Somme in France and to pay their respects to past pupils from the school who are buried there.

Care, guidance and support are good features in the school and this is endorsed by the positive response in the large majority of parents' questionnaires. Case studies provided

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by the school show successful outcomes for pupils as a result of timely and effective intervention and liaison with outside agencies.

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 headteacher leads by example in setting out and sharing his vision. There have been a number of staff changes since the previous inspection and restructuring is about to be completed with the appointment of a permanent deputy headteacher. Teamwork is strong and effective delegation of responsibilities ensures that there is not an over dependence on the headteacher. There is a strong sense of shared ownership of the school's priorities. The school development plan accurately identifies areas for improvement but does not have clear lines of accountability for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's work. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly monitored, with subject leaders and senior staff involved in the process. Teachers are given comprehensive verbal feedback and guidance on how to improve their work. As a result, the quality and consistency of teaching has improved and standards are steadily rising.

The governing body has a clear understanding of its roles and responsibilities. Governors use their expertise and local knowledge to benefit the school and fulfil their statutory duties. At present, their monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is satisfactory, particularly in relation to pupils' progress and attainment. Safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated. Training for child protection is up to date and of good quality. Community cohesion is well promoted. The school has a very good understanding of its local community and has made helpful links with schools across the United Kingdom and beyond. Pupils from different cultures and backgrounds represented in the school get on well together and new pupils, including those who are at an early stage of learning English, are welcomed. Staff promote equality of opportunity well. Racist incidents are rare, but procedures are in place to ensure that if any issues arise they are tackled promptly.

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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	3
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	2
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

Induction procedures, including home visits, are good and children settle quickly into school life. From starting points that are lower than expected for this age, children make good progress, particularly in early reading skills. This is due to good, and sometimes outstanding teaching, and because staff pay close attention to children's interests and learning needs. Assessment information is carefully used to plan the next steps of learning and to ensure that the children are motivated. Staff work closely with parents, getting to know the children really well and developing a strong partnership which is maintained through newsletters and informal meetings. The learning environment is highly stimulating and welcoming. It is well resourced and organised to provide a good balance of activities. Children were thoroughly enjoying sitting inside a giant red spider to read books and soaking up the atmosphere of the Witches Garden filled with flying bats, flashing lights and face painting opportunities. Access to the outdoor areas, which contain a range of stimulating equipment and are used in all weathers, is provided on a regular basis. The school has plans in place to improve accessibility to outdoor areas as part of the ongoing school building and renovation work. Effective leadership and management ensure that there is close teamwork between all adults and there is a good focus on keeping children safe and secure.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Parents and carers express positive views about the school. They report that all staff are approachable, dedicated and caring. Parents and carers expressed above average levels of satisfaction in all areas. Parents and carers were particularly positive about how the school kept their children safe and how much they enjoyed school. Very few comments were made by parents and carers on the questionnaires. One comment was received relating to previous instability in staffing. This issue has now been resolved by the school. A few parents and carers reported to inspectors that they would appreciate individual appointments to talk to teachers during parents' evenings. The school is considering this request.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stechford 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 242 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	57	16	38	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	62	16	38	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	50	17	40	4	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	40	21	50	1	2	3	7
The teaching is good at this school	20	48	18	43	2	5	2	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	50	16	38	2	5	3	7
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	45	19	45	2	5	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	40	17	40	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	48	18	43	2	5	2	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	48	17	40	0	0	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	40	19	45	1	2	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	17	40	16	38	2	5	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	57	14	33	1	2	3	7

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



4 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stechford Primary School, Birmingham, B33 8SJ

I am writing to thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with those of you we met and watching you work and play. You told us that you were happy and we see that is the case in the helpful way you treated each other. We found that Stechford Primary is a good school. Your teachers make lessons interesting and you try hard. You get on well together and know a lot about how to stay safe, particularly during the building work. We could see that you really enjoy the Wake Up, Shake Up sessions.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do a number of things to improve your school. Although your lessons are good, your teachers could make them even better. They need to make sure that you have plenty of opportunities to practice your writing in different subjects, that you have enough time in lessons to finish your work to a good standard and that those of you who are more able are given work that is challenging. We have also asked that plans the school has to improve further are written in a way that is helpful to all the staff and the governing body so they can check how well the school is doing.

You can help the school become even better by making sure you attend as often as possible and by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Marian Harker

Her Majesty's Inspector

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