

St Stephen's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100621
Local Authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	376428
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2011
Reporting inspector	David Radomsky

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Black
Headteacher	Louise Salewski
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 January 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons taught by 11 teachers, and meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, parents, carers and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised policies, exercise books, monitoring information, safeguarding procedures, data about past and recent performance, and the school's improvement plans. The team analysed 112 parental questionnaires, 25 completed by staff and 107 by pupils.

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

- How effectively are leaders at all levels evaluating school performance and making sustainable improvements?
- How effectively does the school support the academic achievement and personal development of its more vulnerable pupils, especially those that join at other than the usual times?
- How well do teachers ensure that activities in lessons enable all pupils to engage and the more able to attain higher grades?

Information about the school

St Stephen's CofE Primary School is an average-sized school. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those known to be eligible for free school meals are well above average. A larger than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities; most of this group have speech, language and communication needs. The number of students who speak English as an additional language is well above average, as is the proportion of children entering the Nursery who are at the early stages of English acquisition. The proportion of those who join or leave the school other than at the usual time is also above average. The school has a range of accreditations, including advanced Healthy Schools Status and an Activemark award, and is part of the 'In Harmony' social uplift through music project. There is a children's centre on site managed by the governing body.

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

1

Main findings

This is a good and rapidly improving school which plays an important part in the life of the local community. Support for pupils facing challenging circumstances and their families in conjunction with its children's centre is an outstanding feature of the school. As one parent put it, 'This is a very good school which is very supportive to parents and carers.' Through accurate identification and effective support systems, the school ensures that pupils who speak English as an additional language, those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those joining the school other than at the usual times achieve well. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that pupils adopt very healthy lifestyles, as reflected in the school's advanced Healthy Schools Status and its Activemark award. Pupils feel safe in school and attendance is above average and rising. Pupils develop confidence and behave in a polite, thoughtful and supportive manner, contributing to a very positive and nurturing school culture which is underpinned by the moral values of its Christian ethos. Pupils make an excellent contribution to their school, local and international communities, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

The good curriculum meets the needs and aspirations of most pupils. Through partnership work with many agencies and the varied in-school activities, pupils have many opportunities to develop academically and personally. However, there are not yet enough opportunities for the development of advanced literacy and mathematical skills so that a larger proportion of pupils attain the higher grades in national tests.

The quality of teaching and learning has improved considerably since the last inspection and is good overall. Occasionally, however, planning does not take into account pupils' full range of needs and abilities, especially by challenging the most able. Almost all teachers ensure that their pupils receive good guidance on how to improve their work, but in some cases pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to respond to teachers' comments and learn from their mistakes.

The headteacher, ably assisted by senior staff and governors, has created a unity of purpose and has been the driving force in striving for improvement. The school knows itself extremely well and is reflective and self-critical. Decisive actions have rapidly accelerated pupils' progress in the last four years so that they now attain at above-average levels by the end of Year 6. Excellent systems are in place for tracking pupils' achievement and for supporting those who are not meeting expectations. Through their own evaluation, leaders have identified the need to hone their monitoring of teaching to focus more sharply on the learning of all pupils.

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They have galvanised the enthusiasm and commitment of staff. A track record of rapid and continuous improvement in all aspects of pupils' learning and well-being, combined with the strong challenge and support offered by the governing body, demonstrates an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more pupils make consistently outstanding progress by:
 - spreading the best practice in teaching so that activities, especially for the more-able pupils, are all effectively planned and targeted
 - ensuring that all pupils have sufficient opportunities to respond to their teachers' feedback
 - ensuring that monitoring consistently focuses on the learning of all pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The quality of learning seen in lessons during the inspection was good overall, and confirmed the school's own analysis that pupils make good, and sometimes outstanding, progress and achieve well. Pupils enter Nursery with very low levels of skill and ability, and by the end of Year 2, their attainment has reached average levels. By the end of Year 6, continuing an upward trend, their attainment is above average in English and mathematics, although the proportion attaining the higher levels remains below average. No groups make less than good progress.

Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy their lessons a great deal. The level of commitment to their work is high and their excellent behaviour is a significant factor in their successful learning. Pupils respond effectively to the agreed 'cooperative standards' and so collaborate well when working in groups or in pairs. For example, during a Year 5/6 literacy lesson based on Roman gladiators, they discussed in groups what it might be like to live a life of a gladiator. They then debated thoughtfully the teacher's moral challenge about the rights and wrongs of fighting animals.

Pupils value the wide range of opportunities to take on responsibilities in school and to contribute to the wider community. For instance, pupils decided that they wished to make eco-friendly bags as part of their sustainability lessons. They managed the design and manufacture of the bags and sold them to members of the community. They proudly raise funds for a variety of good causes and ran a campaign for the purchase of a television for a local shelter for the homeless.

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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	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and through well-established relationships with their pupils ensure that all pupils engage well in lessons. Teaching assistants effectively support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In most lessons, teachers plan for the learning needs of all pupils, set a good pace and create opportunities for pupils to engage in a wide range of activities. Occasionally, when the pace is too slow and activities are not sufficiently well targeted, especially for the most able, pupils' progress slows. In most cases, marking is regular and gives pupils a good steer towards making improvements. However, teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils follow up on their feedback.

The curriculum is well organised and enriched with a range of additional opportunities. The school is justifiably proud of its work in promoting the playing of musical instruments and singing. Through the 'In Harmony' project, pupils have many opportunities to give public performances and to work with school choirs and orchestras from across the country. Pupils benefit from visits, such as to the Science Museum, and from a partnership with a neighbouring secondary school to develop an understanding of the dangers posed by joining gangs. The school provides a wide range of enrichment activities, including sport, street dancing, and homework and gardening clubs. These opportunities ensure that pupils enjoy a wide range of stimulating experiences which effectively helps to support their achievement and personal development. Participation in curricular initiatives in English, mathematics and science since the previous inspection has made a significant contribution to pupils' higher attainment.

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

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The outstanding care, guidance and support that the pupils and their families receive underpin the very positive atmosphere within the school. All pupils and their families are well known to the school and support is well targeted. The excellent, integrated, extended facilities available at the children’s centre, complemented by very strong links with families, partnerships with agencies and carefully planned provision, combine to ensure that all pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable receive well-tailored support.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school benefits from the inspirational leadership provided by the headteacher, who joined the school just before the previous inspection. Since then, the school has improved rapidly in all aspects of its work so that in 2010 it was in the top 100 most-improved schools in the country. The governing body and leaders communicate a shared vision that is highly ambitious, and their ‘Roadmap to Outstanding’ document sets out highly aspirational, quantifiable targets for improvement, together with action plans. Monitoring and evaluation are regular and robust. Staff morale is very high and all are proud to be members of this school community, which willingly shares its resources and programmes, such as the ‘Shine’ Saturday school for pupils in the area working below age-related expectations, with local schools.

A focus on the professional development of teachers and some innovative curriculum development have been instrumental in raising pupils’ levels of attainment. The school has strong links with the Institute of Effective Education at the University of York, and participates in its research-based literacy programme which has raised pupils’ attainment in reading and writing. The regular pupils’ progress meetings held with senior leaders and individual teachers ensure that underachieving pupils are spotted quickly and remedies put in place. Leaders are increasingly effective at monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, but there is still more to do to ensure that the most-able pupils are consistently challenged.

The school’s commitment to community cohesion is exemplary. As a result, pupils have a strong understanding of the diversity of religious, ethnic and cultural groups locally, nationally and internationally. Pupils enjoyed the recent opportunity during

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assembly to converse with pupils at a school in Jepe, Tanzania, via a Skype link, and to discuss the similarities of and differences between their respective ways of life. Pupils are now actively collecting donations to assist their Tanzanian peers in acquiring a water pump for their village.

Every effort is made to fully include pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities fully in all aspects of school life and all pupils have equal opportunities to participate in activities. For example, vulnerable pupils are targeted, supported and encouraged to participate in activities that will improve their personal development and progress.

The governing body meets its statutory duties well. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and reviewed regularly, and there are effective measures in place to check and vet staff before they are appointed to the school. Staff are also well trained in child-protection procedures. Governors bring a good range of skills and expertise to the school, and demonstrate a strong capacity to influence the school's future strategic direction.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge that are well below expectations for their age. By the time they reach Year 1, although children's attainment in the early learning goals in most areas is still below average, it is close to age-related expectations in communication and in dispositions and attitudes, and their progress overall is good.

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Provision is good overall and leads to children enjoying coming to school and engaging in the rich variety of activities available. Teaching is good, and there is a good balance between child-initiated and teacher-led activities. Teachers successfully develop children’s speaking and listening skills through effective questioning. Inspectors saw adults encouraging pupils to talk about fireworks on bonfire night. Children were learning to share and work independently by creating their own tally charts recording different fireworks seen and using these to practise their counting. The formal teaching of letters and sounds, however, is less effective as sessions tend to be too long and are not planned well enough to meet the full range of children’s needs. The indoor and outdoor facilities are attractive and provide a stimulating environment which effectively enhances learning in all six areas of learning. Children’s health and safety are ensured and there are good links between home and school. Through excellent partnership work with the children’s centre, parents and carers are supported to develop their own language skills and are encouraged to be involved actively in their children's learning.

The phase is well led and managed, and leaders have identified the need to improve planning so that adults better promote the next steps of learning in response to children’s self-initiated play.

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

The return rate of the Ofsted questionnaire was above average. Almost all of the parents and carers who responded to the parental questionnaire were very positive about the school. They were particularly positive about how their children enjoy school, the school’s due regard for their children's safety, how well the school keeps them informed of their children’s progress and how well the school helps their children have a healthy lifestyle. Inspection evidence concurred with this. A few parents and carers raised concerns about the amount of progress that their children are making at school. During this inspection, inspectors found that all pupils make good progress and some make outstanding progress.

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 112 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 234 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	66	59	42	38	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	65	58	44	39	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	61	54	44	39	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	53	38	34	10	9	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	60	54	43	38	6	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	55	49	47	42	2	2	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	50	48	43	2	2	1	1
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)	39	35	58	52	6	5	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	41	37	54	48	7	6	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	49	44	39	4	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	38	47	42	7	6	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	53	47	49	44	5	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	60	54	44	39	0	0	4	4

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



9 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Stephen's CofE Primary School, London, SW8 1EJ

Thank you for the warm welcome that you gave us when we visited your school. We greatly enjoyed meeting and talking to you. Yours is a good school and these are some of the reasons why.

- Your headteacher, staff and governing body want to help you to do the best you can and you are extremely well cared for and supported.
- You clearly enjoy school, and we were very impressed by your outstanding behaviour and by your friendliness towards each other.
- You know how to lead a healthy lifestyle and that regular exercise is important, and you know how to stay safe.
- The school provides you with many enjoyable and fun learning opportunities.
- You take on lots of responsibilities in school and proudly raise money for many good causes.
- Most of your lessons are well prepared, and your teachers work with you to make your learning exciting.

We have asked the school to do these things to make it even better.

- Your teachers are going to make sure you have opportunities to improve your work after they mark your books and tell you how you can improve.
- Your teachers are also going to make sure that the work they give you is suitable to help each of you make the best possible progress.
- School leaders will regularly check that each of you is helped to do your very best.

All of you can contribute to these improvements by working hard and responding well to all that the teachers ask you to do.

We wish you all the best for the future, and thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

David Radomsky
Lead inspector

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