

Stewart Headlam Primary School

Tapp Street, London, E1 5RE

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Standards in English and mathematics have risen steadily over the last two years. Pupils make good progress across the school, often from low starting points. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 make outstanding progress.
- Teaching is consistently good in most classes. Work is carefully planned to meet the wide range of needs. Reading is taught well throughout the school.
- Leaders and managers have taken action to eliminate inadequate teaching. They have high expectations of staff with management responsibilities. More staff are routinely involved in checking pupils' learning. As a result, teaching is improving and there is much that is outstanding.
- The planned curriculum links different subjects together in topics to make learning relevant and fun, and these are enlivened by regular visits to places of local and cultural interest. This strongly promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' attitudes towards learning are strong and this has a positive impact on their progress. They behave thoughtfully at all times and say they feel safe. They enjoy school and this is reflected in their improving attendance.
- Governors know the school well, and have helped to build strong partnerships with parents, carers and the local community. As a result, the school is a happy and harmonious place to be.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, and not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that pupils make rapid progress, particularly in writing.
- Although the gap in achievement between writing and reading is closing, there are insufficient opportunities to promote extended writing in subjects other than English.
- Information on how well the pupils are doing is not used well enough to promote faster rates of progress in writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 21 lessons or part-lessons taught by 18 teachers.
- Lesson observations were shared with senior leaders. Short visits were made to observe the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and teaching in smaller groups.
- Work in pupils' books was analysed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, the school's records of monitoring, minutes of meetings of the governing body, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, attended assemblies and observed the school's work.
- Inspectors met with different groups of pupils, interviewed a sample of staff, and spoke to parents and carers. They also spoke to members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of parents and carers were sought at the start and end of the school day, and through the school's surveys. Inspectors considered the 19 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also considered written comments from 36 staff.

Inspection team

Brian Netto, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Lesley Leak	Additional inspector
Avtar Sherri	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is larger than most primary schools.
- A large majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most speak English as an additional language. The largest minority ethnic group is from Bangladeshi backgrounds. The proportion of these pupils has increased significantly over the last three years.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average. Most of these pupils have speech and language needs, or behaviour, emotional and social needs.
- The number of pupils who join and leave the school at other than the usual times is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- Since the last inspection, the school has reorganised the senior leadership team and appointed a new deputy headteacher.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching so that pupils make rapid and sustained progress, especially in writing, by teachers:
 - helping pupils make better use of their skills in letters and sounds to develop their vocabulary
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to extend their writing in subjects other than English
 - improving consistency in marking in subjects other than English and mathematics so that pupils know how well they are doing, what they need to do to improve, and providing further opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their new skills.
- Leaders, managers and teachers make better use of information about how well pupils are doing so that work is planned to help pupils better develop their skills in writing across the curriculum.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start the Nursery with skills well below the levels typical for their age. Most speak English as an additional language and through effective teaching of phonics, their reading skills and use of new words develop quickly.
- Small-group work also helps children in the Reception classes to apply these reading skills to new books. For example, one group made fast progress in reading the story of Jack and the Beanstalk through careful application of what they had learned. They were then able to write simple sentences about the story. However, not all children are enabled to make full use of these skills to help them learn new vocabulary. As they go through the Early Years Foundation Stage, overall, children make satisfactory progress.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been average at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, but this represents good progress from often low starting points. This is confirmed by school and national data, and in pupils' books, which shows progress accelerating especially in Years 5 and 6.
- All groups of pupils make good progress from their different starting points, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who are beginning to learn English. This is in part due to the close attention they get from small-group work and one-to-one tuition. For example, pupils in a Year 5 lesson were able to make confident use of a new method to multiply, as a result of effective modelling by the teaching assistant. The attainment of these groups of pupils is in line with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils funded through the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, also progress at a similar rate to their classmates. Their attainment is broadly similar to other pupils' as seen when comparing their average points scores at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Pupils with a Bangladeshi background make good progress. Many develop their language skills quickly.
- The teaching of phonics is strong across the school. Pupils learn to read quickly and are given many opportunities to read widely. The systematic approach to teaching reading across the school results in pupils developing good skills and enjoying a variety of texts. A guided reading session with Year 6 resulted in good progress as pupils worked independently, made effective use of computers, and concentrated for long periods. As one pupil said, 'In Year 6 we have a reading account on the internet which we learn from.' Many pupils take good advantage of the school and local library to extend their reading further.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good in most year groups and there is some that is outstanding. This has led to improving progress over time.
- The best teaching is characterised by an effective use of teaching assistants to support small groups and individuals. Pupils work well together and enjoy strong purposeful relationships with adults. This enables the learning needs of all groups of pupils to be well met.
- A recent focus by the school has resulted in consistently good teaching in mathematics. Year 6 pupils for example, made rapid progress in their calculation of areas of compound shapes. They used different methods and were able to work independently because the work matched their needs, and the teacher had high expectations and regularly reviewed their learning. Similarly regular checks on their learning helped Year 5 pupils make good progress in converting areas from millimetres to squared centimetres.
- There is a positive climate for learning. This is supported by well-prepared resources and effective use of equipment. Teachers explain what successful learning looks like, so pupils can achieve these objectives.
- Much of the marking and feedback in English and mathematics is of high quality. Pupils are

praised for achieving their objectives, and are given precise guidance on what to do to improve their work. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to correct their work and this helps them to consolidate their skills. This has a positive impact in mathematics in particular. However, other marking is inconsistent across the school, particularly of writing in subjects other than English.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave with considerable care and respect for each other. They are helpful and polite to visitors, and their positive attitudes contribute significantly to their successful learning. The very small number of parents and carers who responded to Parent View agree that their children are happy and safe, and that behaviour is good. This was confirmed by parents and carers spoken to by inspectors.
- The well-planned curriculum and regular events like anti-bullying week ensure that pupils are well informed about different sorts of bullying, and know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils mix well across cultural and ethnic groups, and school data confirm that incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rare, and are effectively dealt with when they occur. This ensures that there is no discrimination.
- Pupils take on a wide range of roles around the school. This helps them feel safe and well cared for and contributes significantly to a strong community spirit. For example, playground friends and members of the school council help to ensure that the school runs smoothly and pupils get on well with each other.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast club appreciate the healthy food, and enjoy the range of activities. They are well supported and cared for by the adults who supervise them. One pupil told inspectors, 'We like breakfast club because they give us good food and good games to play.'
- Attendance is average. Improved communication with parents and carers is helping to reduce the number of pupils who are regularly absent.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership team has been strengthened by the appointment of a deputy headteacher following the last inspection. Responsibilities have been shared among leaders who all contribute to regular checks on learning, and to supporting staff. As a result, teaching is improving and the school maintains a strong capacity to sustain this improvement.
- Improved leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage is helping children get off to a better start. Staff are well trained and know how to help young children to learn well.
- The senior leaders use information about how well pupils are achieving to help teachers identify pupils who need extra help. However, this information is not always used effectively to accelerate progress, particularly in writing.
- Leaders accurately assess the school's strengths and areas that need improvement. As a result, well-targeted actions have resulted in priorities being met. For example, the teaching of mathematics has improved and is consistently good across the school.
- Pupils given additional support make good progress. This reflects the school's firm commitment to promoting equality of opportunity.
- Pupils have numerous opportunities to develop their creative skills. Many take advantage of music tuition, and they speak warmly of their choir performing at the O2 Centre in London. They make regular visits to museums and places of worship, and this contributes strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school makes good choices in buying in services from the local authority. For example, support is provided to help the school assess pupils in their home languages. Relationships with parents and carers are strong, even though many speak little English, as staff communicate regularly with them in their home languages. Parents and carers are regularly involved in

workshops which help them with practical skills, such as sewing and computer skills. The parents' centre is used well, and the crèche ensures that all families can make use of the facilities.

■ The local authority has provided useful support to the school over time.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– Governors make effective use of their experience and knowledge of the community to promote strong relations with parents and carers. Members of the governing body reflect the ethnic and religious backgrounds of the community, and this promotes better communication. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance and the quality of teaching when compared with local schools and against national expectations. They are involved in ensuring that staff performance is checked and rewarded where relevant. They also check that funding is used appropriately, such as the pupil premium, which is helping to ensure that pupils eligible for this achieve well and are well cared for. They enable the school to devote additional funds to meet the needs of other pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable and who are not eligible for this funding, for example through specific tuition for small groups of pupils. Funds are targeted well to meet school priorities, and governors take advantage of training offered by the local authority. All governors for example receive regular training in safeguarding, on understanding pupil data and on financial matters. This helps them to ensure that all statutory requirements are met including those relating to safeguarding.

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

Unique reference number	100923
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	402837

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	451
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mujibur Rahman
Headteacher	Cathy Gillespie
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2008
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