



# St Stephen's Junior School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 118537  
**LEA** Kent  
**Inspection number** 280339  
**Inspection dates** 4 October 2005 to 5 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Carole Skinner RISP

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	Hales Drive
<b>School category</b>	Community		St Stephens
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11		Canterbury, Kent CT2 7AD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01227 464119
<b>Number on roll</b>	366	<b>Fax number</b>	01227 780855
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Philip Munson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 January 2001	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Stuart Pywell

<b>Age group</b> 7 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 4 October 2005 - 5 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 280339
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Stephen's Junior School is situated on the outskirts of Canterbury and draws its pupils from a wide range of social backgrounds. Approximately a third of the pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. Attainment on entry to the school varies between average and below average from year to year. The number of pupils whose first language is not English is similar to that seen in most schools. Pupils mainly come from White backgrounds, with a small number of Indian, Bangladeshi or Chinese heritage. A few pupils speak a language other than English at home but most of these are able to speak English fluently.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Stephen's Junior School is a good school with many outstanding features. It provides very good value for money. Parents are mostly very happy with the school and pupils enjoy learning and achieve very well.

The headteacher, staff and governors are consistent in their pursuit of excellence and there is no complacency. Teaching is mostly at least good, and some is outstanding. As a result, all pupils make good progress throughout the school, and some make very good progress to reach above average standards by the time they leave. Although boys also make good progress, they are still outstripped by the girls, and the school is constantly seeking ways to raise their achievement, especially in writing. All staff are committed to improving the quality of pupils' learning and the school provides very good training and support to enable them to do this.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and these underpin their good progress. The school provides excellent levels of care, guidance and support for all pupils which contribute significantly to their good progress. Pupils benefit from a varied and interesting curriculum which is enriched by an excellent range of additional activities.

These judgements are similar to the school's own views. Knowledgeable and dynamic leadership and outstanding teamwork at all levels are the main reasons for the school's success. Its commitment to sharing what is found to work well and speedy diagnosis of its shortcomings place the school in a strong position to make further improvements.

### What the school should do to improve further

- raise the quality of all teaching to the highest standard through continued support and coaching by teachers who currently demonstrate the best practice
- continue to explore and implement strategies to ensure that boys are given every opportunity to reach higher standards, particularly in writing.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good, given the pupils' average standards on entry to the school. Most meet or exceed the challenging targets which the school sets for them. Standards in English and mathematics are above average and have remained so since the last inspection. Standards in science fell in 2004 but have risen to their former high levels in 2005 as a result of greater emphasis on the investigational aspects of the subject.

Provisional results for 2005 indicate a slight dip in standards in English and mathematics but achievement remains good as this group of pupils had significantly lower than average attainment on entry. Pupils do better in reading than in writing, and girls do much better than boys in writing. The school is currently concentrating on enabling boys to develop writing skills more successfully.

Pupils also do well in information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education, where teaching, the curriculum, resources and leadership are very strong. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well because they receive very good support. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who do not speak English as a first language achieved satisfactorily in 2004. More recent data shows that they are achieving well. More able pupils are given challenging work and reach high standards.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their moral, social and cultural development is a very strong feature. Attendance is similar to that of schools nationally and the school works hard to discourage parents from taking their children on holiday during term time. Pupils enjoy learning, behave very well and like the range of activities. They feel safe, knowing that there is always an adult to turn to if necessary.

The school council helps pupils develop responsible attitudes and they enjoy their increasing 'say' about what goes on. The pupils' role in the school community is very well established. The 'red hat' pupils really enjoy their playground responsibilities. The pupils' involvement and links with other schools, churches and local businesses are very well established. Their progress in gaining basic skills makes a very good contribution to their future economic well-being, and they develop confident attitudes in their relationships with others.

Pupils appreciate the school's focus on healthy snacks at playtimes and relish the 'home-cooked' lunches. Many enjoy the very good range of sporting clubs and physical activities that take place after school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good and have some outstanding features, with some teaching that is satisfactory. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught very well throughout the school, although this has not yet had a significant impact on raising the standard of boys' writing. Teachers are persistent in their efforts to find ways to engage boys in learning.

Teaching pupils in groups by ability is having a positive effect on their learning in literacy and numeracy. Some outstanding teaching in a Year 6 literacy lesson showed that the needs of the most able pupils are met very well. Pupils with learning difficulties have high levels of adult support which helps them to progress well. Teachers have very high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and achievement. They set challenging targets for pupils and check their progress regularly to ensure they are on track.

Advanced skills teachers and senior staff provide very effective support for less experienced teachers and demonstrate good practice. Teaching assistants make a

valuable contribution to pupils' learning and some higher level teaching assistants use their expertise to very good effect in ICT and physical education.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets pupils' needs and external requirements well. It has recently been planned around central themes to give greater breadth to pupils' learning. The school is currently developing stronger links between subjects to make learning more creative, relevant and meaningful. Teachers in each year group plan lessons together, ensuring good consistency between classes. Specialist teaching of Spanish, French and Italian expands pupils' command of language and their awareness of other cultures. Very good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Careful planning and organisation of small groups for activities enable them to make very good progress.

Many pupils take advantage of the wide variety of extra curricular activities. There are particularly good opportunities for sport. Other clubs include chess, ICT, lace-making and drama. These contribute significantly to pupils' learning, personal development and team work. Visits, including a weekend residential trip, enrich the curriculum and are very popular with pupils. The school makes particularly good use of the city of Canterbury to enrich pupils' learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding and make a considerable contribution to their personal development and well-being. High staffing levels ensure very good levels of supervision, and relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Parents value highly the school's very caring ethos. Rigorous child protection procedures ensure that vulnerable pupils are supported very effectively. The headteacher is particularly supportive to pupils who need extra guidance, or someone to speak up for them. Very effective health and safety procedures and vigilance about security ensure pupils' safety.

A counselling service for pupils and the family liaison officer provide additional support where required. In lessons and through regular homework, pupils receive very good guidance on how to improve their work. Challenging targets for improvement are set for groups of pupils, which help them make the most of their potential.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good, with many outstanding features. The headteacher possesses outstanding leadership qualities and is committed to achieving excellence in all aspects of school life. He and senior staff are very successful at developing leadership skills in others and in using the wide range of expertise within

the school to improve teaching and learning. Excellent teamwork among all staff promotes consistency and a shared vision for the future of the school. Teachers and support staff are highly valued and encouraged, with the result that more experienced teachers often move on to posts of greater responsibility in other schools. The school is also very successful in training students and newly qualified teachers. Coordination of subjects is good, and leadership in English, mathematics, science, ICT and physical education is particularly strong. Governors are very well informed and highly effective in their strategic role.

Rigorous self-evaluation involves governors, teachers, parents and pupils in identifying the school's strengths and how it could do better. Very good arrangements for checking the quality of teaching and learning ensure that shortcomings are quickly identified and steps taken to bring about improvement. Advanced skills teachers and senior staff work effectively alongside less experienced colleagues to share their considerable expertise. Clear targets for the school, its pupils and all staff ensure a strong focus on raising achievement. For example, the school is exploring ways to raise boys' attainment in writing. The way the school has maintained and continues to improve upon its high standards during a recent period of high staff turnover shows how well it is equipped to continue on its journey towards overall excellence.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

St Stephen's Junior School Hales Drive Canterbury Kent CT2 7AD

Thursday, 6th October 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for being so helpful and welcoming to the inspectors who visited your school. We very much enjoyed coming to some of your lessons and looking at your work. We especially enjoyed chatting to some of you over lunch and out in the playground. Thank you, too, to the members of the school council who met with one of the inspectors to talk about the school.

These are some of the things we like about your school:

the way you work hard and make good progress in your lessons, although we notice that some boys do not make quite as much progress as girls in writing

your teachers make lessons interesting for you and set you challenging targets to get the best out of you

the way you develop as people and make a contribution to the life of the school is outstanding

all of the adults look after you very well and help you to feel safe and keep healthy; we especially enjoyed the new healthy school meals, as you do

the headteacher and senior staff lead your school very well indeed and never stop trying to make it better.

To make sure the school keeps improving, we have asked your headteacher, staff and the school's governors to think about:

helping boys in school find different ways to reach higher standards in their writing

finding ways to help every teacher to become outstanding all the time.

With best wishes,

Carole Skinner (Lead Inspector)