



Stanford Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102660
Local Authority Merton
Inspection number 286452
Inspection dates 5–6 December 2006
Reporting inspector Marianne Harris

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Chilmark Road
School category	Community		Norbury
Age range of pupils	3–11		London SW16 5HB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8764 3892
Number on roll (school)	415	Fax number	020 8679 7303
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms Pamela Cooney
		Headteacher	Ms Jane Swann White (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school in a culturally diverse, socially mixed area. More than three quarters of the pupils are from a minority ethnic background, mainly black African and Caribbean, and about a third of pupils are learning English as an additional language. The school currently has an acting headteacher as the governors were unable to appoint a permanent headteacher when the job was advertised.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school and most parents are very supportive of it. There are some who are concerned about the future of the school because it does not currently have a permanent headteacher. Parents are anxious about the effect that this will have on their children's education. This concern is unfounded and arises because the governors have not kept parents sufficiently informed about what is happening. The acting headteacher and senior leadership team are each doing a good job. The effective strategies that have been developed over the years have been maintained and pupils achieve well and make good progress, whatever their age and ability. Although children begin school with attainment that is much lower than expected for their age, they make good progress because of the good provision in the Foundation Stage. This good progress continues and by the end of Year 2 standards are just below average. By the end of Year 6, they are broadly average. Over the last few years standards have risen steadily and this trend is continuing.

Pupils like school because lessons are interesting and fun and teachers form good relationships with their classes. A good personal, social and health programme enables pupils to learn about getting along and how to look after themselves as they grow up. Teachers encourage pupils to work together well, celebrating the diversity that exists within the school so that all can make good progress academically as well as personally. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school community. However, they feel that there are too few formal opportunities for them to give their views and share their ideas with staff regarding what would make school life better for them.

Teaching and learning are good. Work is well planned to meet the needs of all groups of pupils, although there are times when mathematics work is not challenging enough for more able pupils. Marking is of a high quality and gives pupils good ideas about how to improve their work. Pupils themselves know what they need to do to reach higher standards and are keen to learn. The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides many opportunities for pupils to visit the local area and have interesting visitors into school. Good care is taken of the pupils and teachers make sure they make good progress by accurately assessing what they can do and setting realistic targets so that they can achieve well.

The leadership team, including the acting headteacher, has been most successful in maintaining the school's strengths and has clear plans on how to make things better. They have focused successfully on raising standards and ensuring that all pupils are confident in their approach to learning. The governors support the school well and are very aware of the challenges that face them. Given this good track record, the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to make their views and ideas known
- Provide consistent challenge for more able pupils in mathematics

- Ensure parents are kept fully informed about the developments in the school so that they can all feel confident about their children's education.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From a low starting point children in the Foundation Stage make good progress. Although many do not reach all of the expected goals for their learning by the time they enter Year 1, they achieve well. This good progress continues throughout their time in the school because of the consistently good teaching. Consequently, they attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Standards have been rising steadily over the last three years, and there has been an increase in the proportions of pupils who reach the higher level in English, mathematics and science.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well because they receive good support in lessons and work is matched effectively to their needs and abilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, and this helps them to achieve well. Their social skills are outstanding, thanks to the success of the school's programme for personal, social and health education. This focuses on helping pupils understand what they can achieve. One child reported 'I feel really, really happy because I have lots of friends.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and they behave well in class and in the playground. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance consistently matches national levels.

'It's very, very safe here,' confirmed one pupil, and others agreed that they feel very secure at school and know what to do if they have any problems. The school has been successful in steadily reducing racist incidents and racial harmony is excellent. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to eat healthily, but do not always make the healthiest choices in their food. Pupils are concerned that the lack of school council meetings at present means they have no formal channel through which to make their voice heard and influence the work of the school. Their excellent social skills will be of great value to them in their future lives, and they are making good progress in developing the basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress during their time in school because teaching and learning are good. Teachers form good relationships with the pupils and encourage them to be confident in what they can do. Assessments are good and cover all subjects. Marking is of a high quality and not only encourages pupils by giving praise where it is appropriate, but also gives pupils ideas of how they can improve their work. Lessons are fun and pupils themselves comment on how much they enjoy learning. The purpose of each lesson is clear and work is usually well matched to the ability of each group within the class. Occasionally work in mathematics is not well matched and more able pupils find work too easy.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that promotes academic and personal development effectively. All subjects are covered and national requirements met. The programme for promoting pupils' personal development is especially successful and has led to pupils becoming confident and mature in their attitude to learning. The rich diversity within the school is celebrated and all feel valued. There are good, planned opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects and this has led to standards in English rising over the last few years. Pupils comment on the wide range of visits they enjoy, including a residential trip, and of the many visitors that come into school to enrich their lessons. There is a reasonable number of after-school clubs, although there is not as many as is usually seen in schools.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good, particularly support for personal and academic development. This has resulted in pupils becoming more confident and beginning to assess for themselves how well they are doing. Teachers have set targets for groups of pupils in their class and their progress is tracked effectively. This system is firmly established in the school and any pupil who is not making good progress is identified and effective support put in place. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language, or who have learning difficulties and disabilities are well cared for. Their needs are accurately assessed and effective support put in place so that they can make good progress. Child Protection systems are satisfactory, although not all staff have been fully trained in current procedures. Pupils know that there is an adult they can turn to if they have a problem.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management are good. Everyone is clear about their roles within the school and this has led to the successful maintenance of established and effective systems and procedures for raising standards. Senior staff analyse national test results and use the information well to set priorities for improvement. Weaknesses are identified and appropriate strategies put in place. This has been particularly successful in raising standards in English across the school, and in ensuring that standards rise steadily.

The leadership team monitors teaching rigorously so that there is consistent practice across the school. This has also contributed to the rising standards. The leadership team have also been very successful in reducing the incidents of racial tension as all pupils learn to get along well and appreciate the rich diversity within the school. Governors are knowledgeable and involved in the school. They are prepared to challenge the school to ensure that pupils make good progress and are well cared for. There has been less success in keeping parents informed about the appointment of the new headteacher. This has caused some anxiety as parents worry about what will happen in the near future. However, most are very supportive of the school and know that it is doing a good job.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us into your school a few days ago. You were all very helpful in telling us about your school and, as promised, we are now writing to let you know what we found out. Our main finding is that Stanford is a good school.

We think that you all work hard and that you make good progress during your time in school. You told us that lessons are interesting and that you like coming to school. We agree that teaching is good and learning must be fun. We have asked your teachers to make sure that all of you have work that is challenging, particularly in mathematics. We think that this will help you reach higher standards.

You told us that you feel safe in school and we know that your teachers do all they can to make you feel that there is always an adult you can turn to if you have a problem. We think that you are very sensible in your attitudes and that you all behave well. We especially liked the way you all try to care for each other, and were impressed by how you all got on so well. You also told us that you are worried about not having the chance to let teachers know your views and ideas about school life. We agree that there are not enough opportunities for this and have asked your teachers to provide sessions where your ideas and concerns can be discussed.

We have also asked the governors to keep your parents well informed about what is happening with the appointment of the new headteacher. We judge the school to be well led and managed, but we know that some of your parents are worried about this. Please remember to take home any letters you may be given so that everyone knows what is happening.

Thank you once again for all your help and we wish you good luck in the future.

Marianne Harris

Lead inspector