

Stamford Park Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106285
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	287466
Inspection date	11 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Brenda McIntosh

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	258
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs Cathryn Downing
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001
School address	Cedar Road Hale Altrincham Cheshire WA15 9JB
Telephone number	0161 9283608
Fax number	0161 9285330

Age group	7–11
Inspection date	11 May 2007
Inspection number	287466

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Stamford Park Junior School is slightly larger than an average size primary school.

It serves a diverse catchment area which is becoming increasingly wide. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The majority of pupils are from a White British background. The school has an increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Few pupils have English as an additional language but the number is increasing. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of pupils entering the school in Year 3 transfer from Stamford Park Infant School. The headteacher was appointed in September 2005. The school has received many awards to recognise various aspects of its work including ArtsMark, ActiveMark Gold, a National Healthy Schools award and a British Council International award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Stamford Park Junior is an outstanding school where pupils achieve exceptionally well. It provides pupils with a very varied and interesting education and consequently enables them to move on to secondary school as confident and socially and academically adept young people. Pupils say it is a 'sporty, caring school and a wonderful place to learn'. The overwhelmingly majority of parents are very supportive in their views about the school and rate it highly. Outstanding leadership and management at all levels have ensured that the school has maintained its high standards over a number of years. As governors point out, 'Everyone works as a team towards the same goal, building effectively on best practice with a willingness to embrace change to improve the school even further.'

Pupils enter the school with well above average standards. Very close links with the infant school ensure that the pupils settle quickly and happily and get off to a flying start. There is much discussion about pupils' attainment so work is planned at a precise level right from the beginning. From this very positive start pupils' achievement is outstanding. An excellent system for tracking pupils' progress is central to this high achievement. Pupils progress at a very good rate throughout the school to attain consistently high standards by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Standards in English and mathematics are often exceptionally high. Although standards in English are very high the school has introduced strategies to narrow the gap between the results in reading and writing, particularly at the higher level. These initiatives are already showing signs of success in the current Year 6. All groups of pupils make very good progress and achieve highly, although their handwriting and the presentation of their work are not always of a consistently high standard. Pupils joining the school with English as an additional language are very well supported to enable them to follow the full curriculum so they too make very good progress.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum are outstanding. There is a firm commitment to teaching basic skills but also to providing a wide range of learning opportunities in other subjects. The links made between subjects are highly imaginative and add significant richness and enjoyment to pupils' learning. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensure that learning experiences are diverse, relevant and exciting. This is why pupils are very well motivated, enjoy learning and achieve highly. Excellent partnerships with local secondary schools and sports clubs further enrich the curriculum. These lead to opportunities for pupils to learn French and Spanish, develop their creative skills through arts projects and take part in an extensive range of sporting activities. Every opportunity is taken to use information and communication technology (ICT) to enliven learning. Pupils are skilful in using ICT quite naturally to support their learning in other subjects. The range of skills that they are developing is preparing them very well for their futures in an increasingly digital world.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Relationships are very good and pupils know that teachers have their best interest at heart. Pupils play a very active role in the school community, through, for example, making decisions as school councillors and acting as playground leaders, Year 6 monitors and librarians. Many pupils represent the school by taking part in inter-schools tournaments. The increasing emphasis on ecological initiatives in school has developed pupils' understanding of their responsibilities to the global community.

The school continually strives to improve further. High expectations of senior leaders and teaching staff are reflected in the modest judgements in the school self-evaluation for teaching

and learning and leadership and management. Self-evaluation is otherwise accurate, reflecting rigorous monitoring, and results in a precise understanding of pupils' achievements and where the school could do even better. Actions taken by the school are well targeted, for example as seen in the improved attainment in science in 2006. Although no significant weaknesses were identified at the last inspection the school has moved on very well since then, continually improving its provision to ensure that standards remain consistently high. This track record of continuous improvement and sustained high standards demonstrates an excellent position for continued success. The school provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work is of a consistently high quality throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils enter Year 3 with standards that are well above average. They build securely on their previous learning and make very good progress to attain consistently high standards at the end of Year 6. Standards in English and mathematics are often exceptionally high. A significant number of pupils reach the level higher than that expected of them each year. The test scores of some of the most able pupils show that they achieve exceptionally high standards. Standards in the current Year 6 are as good as in previous years. Challenging targets are met because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils with special gifts or talents have ample opportunities to extend their skills through, for example, challenge groups or the partnerships with other schools and sports clubs. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress, often reaching nationally expected levels. Those pupils learning English as an additional language also make very good progress because of the very effective support they receive. Pupils achieve very well in other subjects; for example, they produce some stunning pieces of artwork.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because of the high priority given to fostering a sense of community and a strong culture of teamwork. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in the well above average levels of attendance. Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around school and this contributes to pupils' high achievement. The vast majority of pupils take part in at least one extra-curricular activity on offer to them. Pupils gain an excellent awareness of healthy lifestyles and keeping fit and eagerly participate in the extensive range of sporting activities. They understand the importance of eating healthily and enjoy the healthy school meals. The school council has recently been involved in developing awareness of environmental issues and the gaining of the Eco-award. Events organised by the Parent and Teachers Association enable pupils to take part in a wide variety of events that include the local and wider community. Year 6 pupils run their own 'newspaper business' which raises money to cover their costs and a substantial profit to purchase new equipment for the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is stimulating, challenges pupils of all abilities and takes account of different learning styles. Lessons are varied and imaginative and as a result pupils' attention and motivation are high. Pupils enjoy learning because they say that teachers break down the learning so they can understand things better. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively to support pupils' learning and help raise achievement. Marking of work is of a high quality and informs pupils how to improve their work. Expectations are high in the way pupils are very well challenged in their work. However, pupils' handwriting and presentation of their work is not consistently good enough throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is very rich and promotes pupils' all-round high achievement exceptionally well. A wide range of partnerships significantly enriches pupils' learning experiences. There is an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, including various sports, golf, ocarina, Spanish and chess. French is taught throughout the school. Leading healthy lifestyles and keeping safe are given strong attention through personal, social and health education. Pupils' cultural development is promoted strongly through the school's international links, history, geography and art. A character in school, known as 'Travelling Ted', travels around the world with pupils and adults and enables pupils to learn about the worldwide community and share experiences of other cultures and lifestyles. Parents are very pleased that the headteacher has improved the provision for music and provided more opportunities for their children to learn to play a musical instrument.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. The school regularly reviews its welfare policies such as those for anti-bullying, behaviour and child protection to keep up to date with requirements. Following recent changes to staffing the school has been diligent in drawing up guidance for staff to maintain a consistency of commitment and approach in implementing such policies throughout the school. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' health and safety are in place. Vetting procedures for the safe recruitment of staff are in line with government requirements. Pupils say that their teachers are caring and help sort out any problems if they arise. They are clear that the recently introduced programme that concentrates on their emotional and social development is really helping them to understand how to handle difficult personal situations and resolve conflicts. Pupils in Year 3 are made welcome when they first arrive and the playground leaders help them to settle in quickly. Academic guidance is excellent. Pupils have a very good involvement in their learning and keep a track of their own progress in their individual 'learning logs'. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at risk of slipping behind in their learning are very effectively supported and helped to do their best.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher sets a very clear direction for improvement. Leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, have a shared vision to provide the very best possible for all pupils. Throughout the school there is a strong team spirit and staff work very well together. The very effective delegation of responsibilities ensures that all staff contribute to the self-evaluation processes. Consequently, monitoring of performance is rigorous and there is an acute awareness that everyone is an important member of the team. The staff are very willing to draw on each other's strengths to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Led by the deputy headteacher, the school has devised an excellent system for monitoring teaching and pupils' performance in the foundation subjects. This enables the subject leaders to monitor their areas rigorously, planning for the whole school and checking the development of pupils' learning from year to year. The school has developed excellent partnerships to broaden the expertise available to enrich pupils' learning experiences significantly. The junior and infant schools are working closely together to implement common strategies to raise attainment in writing. Governors provide very effective support and challenge to the school.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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 making my day in your school so enjoyable. It is a pleasure to be able to write and tell you that Stamford Park Junior is an outstanding school. The headteacher, staff and governors know exactly what needs to be done to improve things further and help you to continue to reach high standards by the time you leave school at the end of Year 6. Teachers work very hard to make sure your lessons are challenging and interesting. You have excellent opportunities to experience a very wide range of interesting activities, especially through the many partnerships and awards the school has gained. It is very good in the way you learn to speak foreign languages and learn about how people live in other countries. The artwork around school is of a high quality. The paintings Year 6 pupils produced while I was at the school were quite stunning.

In lessons and around school your behaviour is excellent and this helps your school to be a calm pleasant place in which to learn. You work hard in lessons and contribute extremely well to school life. I was impressed with the way teachers use the interactive whiteboards to make learning more fun and how you often use your ICT skills to help you with your learning in other subjects. Staff take very good care of you and help you to do your very best.

I did find that the quality of your handwriting and the presentation of your work are not always good enough. I have asked your teachers to help you with this but you can also do your bit by making sure your work is neat and tidy.

Thank you again for making me so welcome. I wish you all the very best for the future and hope you continue to enjoy school.