

Stamford Park Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106286
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	287467
Inspection date	10 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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	254
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Miss D Thatcher
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001
School address	Cedar Road Hale Altrincham Cheshire WA15 9JB
Telephone number	0161 928 4040
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Stamford Park Infant School is slightly larger than an average size primary school. It serves a suburban area of mixed housing, south of Manchester. In recent years the cohort of children entering the school has changed, reflecting a more mixed social range than at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The majority of pupils are of a White British heritage with a small number of minority ethnic groups and a rising number of mainly European families. Very few pupils have English as an additional language but the number is increasing. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school has received a Healthy Schools Award and the Trafford Race Equality Standard, and has recently been awarded a second accreditation for the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

This inspection took place the day before the inspection at Stamford Park Junior School. The headteachers of both schools attended a joint meeting with the Lead Inspector.

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 Infant School is an outstanding school where pupils make exceptional progress in both their academic and personal development. All these young children have an impressive understanding of their rights within the Every Child Matters framework and consequently are kind, considerate and active. The school is highly successful in meeting its aim in promoting an ethos of excellence in all aspects of its work. This is achieved through the outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher, staff and governors, who are not prepared to rest on past successes and who constantly strive to improve the school still further. There is clearly no complacency in this school and this message is often reaffirmed. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the high quality of education the school provides which gets their children off to an excellent start in their learning. Pupils sum up the school with comments such as 'Fun, healthy, enjoyable and we are all friends'.

Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage. They flourish in all areas of their learning because of the exciting imaginative teaching and the guidance given to them. Children's achievement is outstanding. They make excellent progress from average levels of attainment on entry to Nursery to the consistently well above average standards at the end of Year 2. A significant number of pupils reach higher levels than expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Both boys and girls perform at much higher levels in each subject than seen nationally. An example of how the school is always seeking to improve further is seen in the way it has introduced new strategies and resources to narrow the difference in attainment in writing between boys and girls. All groups of pupils do equally well and make rapid progress.

The quality of teaching is excellent and learning moves on at a fast pace. Pupils relish solving problems and meeting challenges. They are happy at school and especially so when busily engrossed in their learning. A significant achievement in pupils' progress is in the way they develop their independence and investigate things for themselves. They get enormous pleasure out of learning because the outstanding curriculum fires their imagination and creativity. It enables them to develop skills in a wide range of subjects. Enjoyment leads to high achievement. Teachers plan exciting links between subjects so pupils can see how learning in one subject helps them in others. For example, the Year 2 pupils clearly gained much enjoyment from the project that involved making cereal packets and a 'healthy cereal' to put in them. This project imaginatively and creatively combined design and technology, art, literacy and numeracy. At the same time, designing, weighing, measuring and learning about healthy eating were all built in naturally. Pupils' academic achievements and practical activities such as this support their economic well-being exceptionally well.

Underpinning pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being is the first-rate level of care, support and guidance they receive. Excellent systems for tracking pupils' progress ensure that any dips in performance are promptly picked up and extra support given when it is needed. Pupils make amazing connections between eating healthily and keeping fit. They say this 'helps to get our brains working so we can learn'. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils gain a very good awareness of the rights and responsibilities of living in a community through their everyday work in school. They know who to go to if they have any difficulties and know that their concerns will be dealt with quickly and effectively.

Self-evaluation is rigorous and leads to an accurate understanding of the pupils' academic and personal achievements. It is somewhat modest in relation to some aspects of provision. This is

because the leadership always perceives it can do even better for the pupils. The school has done very well since the last inspection in maintaining high standards despite changes in its intake. Through robust monitoring systems the leadership has a very clear picture of what has been successful and what needs to be done to improve further. The school gives outstanding value for money and shows an excellent capacity for growing from strength to strength.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school has identified the right priorities for further improvement so there are no further ones to add.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children enter Nursery with skills that are at the levels expected for their age. Here they get off to an excellent start learning equally well both indoor and outdoors. They achieve very well to reach above average standards by the time they enter Year 1. Throughout the rest of the school pupils continue to make very good progress due to inspired and imaginative teaching. Standards are consistently well above average by the end of Year 2. Standards are often exceptionally high, especially in reading and writing. In the current Year 2 standards are every bit as good. Pupils take great pride in their handwriting and the presentation of their work, which is of a high quality. Pupils are very well prepared for the challenges and next steps of their learning in Year 3 in the junior school. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make very good progress so by the end of Year 2 most reach the national expectations in their work. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds starting school with very little or no English receive very good support to help them overcome their language difficulties and so they too make very good progress. Pupils also achieve very well in other subjects including science and information and communication technology (ICT).

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Attendance is well above average, an indication of pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment for school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They are thoughtful and have very good levels of self-esteem, confidence and independence. Their excellent behaviour in lessons contributes significantly to their outstanding achievements and enjoyment of learning. Displays around school are vibrant and show just how much importance the school gives to developing pupils' cultural awareness through art and a rich variety of first-hand experiences. Charitable fund-raising events and links with schools in South America and Tanzania help pupils gain a very good awareness of the wider cultural world. Pupils learn by sharing experiences to respect different races and what it is like to go to school in these countries. They contribute effectively to the school community through accepting various monitoring roles and voicing their opinions through the school council. They collect items for recycling and make use of old material to make sculptures. Pupils gain an excellent awareness of healthy lifestyles, participate in a whole range of physical activities and understand how important it is for them to stay safe. Pupils enjoy thoroughly the regular 'Fitbod' and morning 'Wake up and shake up' sessions. Year 2 pupils demonstrated a very keen awareness of safety when they sensibly put out and used the apparatus in a physical education lesson. Pupils enjoy the healthy 'home-cooked' meals at lunchtime. Many of the lunchboxes from home contain healthy food options, which is indicative of the way parents support school initiatives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

'Fun, enjoyable and interesting' is how some pupils described their lessons. This is because teachers plan exciting practical learning experiences which capture pupils' imagination and promote high levels of motivation. Expectations are high in terms of behaviour, challenge and quality of work. Pupils work productively and no time is wasted. Teachers and teaching assistants work together very effectively to support pupils' individual needs. The correct balance is achieved between the direct teaching of key skills and pupils finding things out for themselves. Pupils' academic progress is rigorously checked so that they are kept on track to reach their potential. The very good quality of teachers' marking helps pupils know what they need to do to improve their work. Children in the Foundation Stage become totally engrossed in the imaginative role play activities, whether it is making canal systems in the sand tray, preparing lunch in the 'mud hut' or cementing bricks together. They gain immense pleasure out of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is planned very effectively to provide great enjoyment without compromising the high priority on developing basic skills. The use of creative arts across the school enriches pupils' learning experiences significantly. It results in pupils' involvement in willow weaving, mosaic work and designing and producing the stunning pieces of large scale artwork displayed around the school. Personal, social and health education has a high priority with strong attention to promoting fitness and healthy lifestyles. Pupils experience a varied range of sporting opportunities and physical activities through the schools sports partnerships and use of local sports coaches. Visits and visitors into school add further enrichment to pupils' learning. Pupils use a wide range of computer software to develop their skills in ICT and to support their learning in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides a very caring and welcoming environment where pupils thrive. Procedures for child protection and to ensure pupils' health and safety are in place. Arrangements to safeguard children meet government requirements. Pupils feel well looked after and safe in school. They say their teachers are kind and caring. Induction arrangements for children into both Nursery and Reception classes are well thought out and help children to settle quickly and happily. The very effective links with the junior school ensure a very smooth transition for pupils and continuity in their learning. Assessment procedures are excellent and underpin pupils' high achievement. Meticulous records are kept and pupils needing additional support are identified quickly. Teachers involve pupils in assessing their work and ask them how they could make their work better. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with specific language needs are very effectively supported and guided in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher and leadership team. She delegates responsibility effectively and encourages a collaborative approach. Each member of the team plays a significant part in monitoring the school's performance and is fully accountable for raising standards. Self-evaluation is rigorous and leads to an accurate picture of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to improve further. Governors are very supportive but also ready to challenge when this is needed, and they therefore contribute fully to the successes of the school. The headteacher is very skilled at finding additional funds from various sources. For example, along with money raised by parents, this has helped tremendously towards the cost of developing the school grounds to create more space for pupils to play and meet the needs of the curriculum. Excellent partnerships with parents, other schools and outside agencies contribute to school improvement and support effectively pupils' learning and personal development. For example, the infant and junior school are working closely together in introducing similar approaches to teaching writing to improve standards even further.

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Annex A

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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Stamford Park Infant School, Hale, WA15 9JB

Thank you for making my visit to your school so enjoyable. You have many wonderful opportunities to choose from that make your learning so interesting and exciting. When I walked around your school I was very impressed with the excellent displays of your work. You must be very proud of the wonderful artwork and mosaics which you have helped to make.

In the short time I was at your school I found lots of things that were quite impressive. I have listed some of these for you.

- The standard of your work was excellent. Your handwriting was especially neat. Do try hard to keep this up.
- Your teachers provide you with really exciting activities that help you find things out for yourself.
- Your behaviour was excellent and you clearly enjoy your lessons.
- You learn about people in other countries and how they live.
- All the adults take very good care of you and make sure you are safe in school.
- You know how to keep fit and healthy.

Your headteacher and other adults know exactly what needs to be done to make sure Stamford Park Infant School continues to be an outstanding school. I know that all the adults who work at the school try their very best to make it a very special and exciting place for you. You too can do your bit by continuing to try your best and behaving so well. I hope you carry on enjoying school and doing so very well with your work.