



Stanford Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114377
Local Authority Brighton and Hove
Inspection number 289891
Inspection dates 21–22 February 2007
Reporting inspector John Carnaghan

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Highcroft Villas
School category	Community		Brighton
Age range of pupils	4–7		BN1 5PS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01273 555240
Number on roll (school)	269	Fax number	01273 551826
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Andrew Fozard
		Headteacher	Karen Wicker
Date of previous school inspection	8 February 2001		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 21–22 February 2007	Inspection number 289891
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Stanford Infant School is larger than most infants' schools. It serves a relatively advantaged urban area. It has fewer-than-average children with learning difficulties and disabilities or children from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are very few children for whom English is not their first language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Stanford Infant School is a vibrant and joyous place to learn; it provides an outstanding education. The key to the many strengths of the school is the excellent, deeply committed leadership and management. The school's vision is shared and put into practice by all adults in the school, ensuring consistent, high quality provision. Since the previous inspection, improvement has been outstanding. The school's view of itself is accurate and perceptive. Provision and standards in the Foundation Stage are outstanding.

Children' personal development is outstanding. Children value one another, turn to each other for help and advice from an early age and know the benefits of working both collaboratively and independently. The school promotes social, moral and cultural understanding effectively but places less emphasis on promoting spirituality through collective worship. The care lavished on children is outstanding and parents recognise this. One parent typically wrote, 'We are thrilled with both the teaching and the caring atmosphere.' Support for children's academic development is both comprehensive yet simple to understand, enabling teachers and children to achieve to the maximum. The school works very well with outside agencies, for example, to support children's specific needs. The curriculum is outstanding. It is stimulating, yet flexible to children's needs and this contributes to their love of learning. It includes the study of French from age four and incorporates a wide range of extra activities at lunchtime and after school.

These many strengths promote outstanding achievement. When children start in Reception, their skills are broadly average. They quickly adopt the school's rigorous approach to learning and progress very well. By the time they leave school, their standards are exceptionally high. Children are valued as individuals and the school is careful to ensure that they receive the proper levels of support and challenge to keep them both interested and 'at full stretch'. This is clearly seen in the outstanding teaching and learning. The comprehensive range of assessment information is extremely well used, for example, ensuring teaching is pitched at the right level.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality and spirituality of daily acts of worship.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children's skills on entry to the Reception class are generally average. By the time they start the National Curriculum in Year 1, their standards are very high. Achievement in the Foundation Stage is outstanding.

The high quality provision continues throughout Years 1 and 2 and, in consequence, children's achievement is, again, outstanding. This includes children with learning difficulties and those who do not speak English as their first language. Standards by the end of Year 2 are exceptionally high, particularly in reading and mathematics.

There is little variation in achievement between subjects or children of varying aptitudes. The school is quick to identify and act on any potential slippage in standards. For example, it was concerned that boys' standards were below those of girls, despite this mirroring the national picture. It has striven to minimise this difference by, for instance, modifying the curriculum for boys and, gradually, the gap has started to close.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

From their first days in school, children develop independence extremely well. In Reception, they have a tremendous grounding in personal development. The excellent behaviour and attitudes fostered in the early years set the pattern for the rest of children's school careers.

Children's thorough enjoyment of school is reflected in good attendance and punctuality. Exemplary attitudes and behaviour are the norm and are underpinned by very good relationships. 'Golden Rules' and initiatives such as 'Stop, I don't like it' give children a very clear understanding of what is expected of them. Children say bullying is rare and that adults deal with any inappropriate behaviour quickly and fairly. Outstanding gains in moral, social and cultural awareness enable children to appreciate the others' achievement, and to show care and consideration for one another. However, the school recognises it has placed less emphasis on promoting children's already good spiritual development in its acts of worship.

Children contribute very well to the school and local communities. They enjoy taking responsibility, such as when acting as 'Stanford Buddies'. The school council makes an effective contribution to school life and ensures children's views are well represented. Raising money for charities and a strong focus on basic skills, together with many opportunities for working together, lays a very firm foundation for children's future working lives. Work related to gaining 'Healthy Schools' status has given children an excellent understanding of the need for safety, exercise and healthy eating.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The way children learn at all stages of their schooling is outstanding. This is due to a number of factors:

Teaching is consistently good or better and good practice is celebrated and shared between teachers. Lessons are thoroughly planned to provide the best possible learning experiences for children. They include challenging activities that are taken at a brisk pace, so attention rarely wanders. Classrooms are well managed by teachers and teaching assistants alike and there is a consistent focus on meeting learning objectives and 'getting on'. Children are perceptively questioned both to consolidate knowledge

and to challenge them to think for themselves. Collaborative learning is promoted from an early age.

The way standards are assessed is outstandingly thorough. Even the youngest children are involved in self-assessment. The way in which assessment information is used is extraordinary. Analysis of assessment results identifies areas where extra assistance or advice is required by children or teachers. This is quickly acted upon. The thoroughness of this process means that each child has a personal learning programme, tailored to their requirements. This supports very rapid achievement.

Children have extremely positive attitudes to their learning, participating enthusiastically in all that they do. They love their lessons and have positive attitudes to both their own and their classmates' learning and contribute fully to both, much encouraged by high expectations and warm praise from their teachers. One pupil in the Reception class said, 'I really, really love really hard challenges ...'.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Excellent curriculum planning and continuity lead to outstanding provision, and this has a positive impact on children's progress and well-being. Children are encouraged from early in Reception to take part in curriculum development and review. The curriculum is adapted to suit children's needs, as in the current Year 2 where new topics have been introduced to appeal to the high proportion of boys. Enjoyable enrichment activities such as visits, visitors and involvement in community arts activities all link strongly with class topic work. For example, a numeracy lesson in the Reception class on numbers up to twenty was followed by a French lesson on the same numbers. There is a splendid range of additional activities and clubs. The quality and range of arts endeavours have twice been recognised by Artsmark. Excellent use is made of literacy, numeracy and ICT in teaching all subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Almost all parents are delighted with the care children receive. As one parent typically wrote, 'The school has provided my son with a safe and secure learning environment, attending to all his needs.' Excellent relationships throughout the school mean learners feel well looked after and are confident approaching adults with any problems. Child protection, risk assessments and health and safety procedures are robust. Arrangements to help children settle into Reception, and to transfer to junior school, are comprehensive. This helps children's confidence in dealing with new situations. A strong focus is given to promoting safe and healthy lifestyles.

Children are regularly set clear, personalised targets for improvement. As one pupil explained, 'It's good to know your targets because they help you get even better.' Personal support for children with diverse needs, and those identified as gifted and talented, is very effective. Equally strong guidance is given to learners at the early stages of learning English.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides exceptional leadership. With excellent support from the leadership team, staff and governors, she has overseen substantial improvements in teaching, the curriculum and resources. These have led to significant improvements in standards, very high achievement, and learners' exceptionally strong personal development. The commitment to achieve the school's aims is widely shared.

The school has a precise understanding of its many strengths and areas for improvement. Development planning is detailed and well constructed and reflects the views of all those associated with the school. Parental and pupil views are sought regularly and taken into account in considering school improvement. The leadership team is very successful in its quest to ensure the school's fully inclusive nature. The school undertakes rigorous evaluations of all that it does. This, together with teachers' thorough knowledge of children's performance, stemming from robust assessment procedures, enables challenging learning targets to be set and attained.

Governors carry out their duties most effectively. They manage finances very well, play their full part in strategic planning, and are effective 'critical friends'. Led by a headteacher with a passion to ensure children have the best education possible and that all learners achieve the best of which they are capable, the school demonstrates an excellent capacity for further improvement.

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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?	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	2
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.

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

It was a great joy to be in your school as visitors not long ago. We all loved meeting you and talking about your school. You told us it was a really good school and we agree. These are the best things:

- Lessons are very good and you get loads of help, so you learn fast.
- The school looks after you very well and helps you grow up as polite, friendly children who get on well with one another and your teachers.
- The topics you study are very interesting.
- The head and other teachers make a very good team and they run the school very well.

The school is so good it hardly needs to improve anything, but there is one thing:

- Assemblies should give you more chances think carefully about what people believe in.

I hope you carry on enjoying your school life. It was very nice meeting you.