

# Stewart Headlam Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100923
<b>Local Authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	307525
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Earish

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	370
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mujibur Rahman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Cathy Gillespie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Tapp Street Stepney London E1 5RE
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 72471 201
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7377 1460

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger-than-average primary school serves a culturally diverse area of Stepney where social circumstances are much less favourable than average. Almost all of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and the vast majority are at the very earliest stages of learning English. Mobility is high with increasing numbers of families moving to better quality accommodation outside the immediate area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, particularly those who struggle with reading and writing, is above that found nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is high.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Stewart Headlam is a good school. 'Good, better best. Never let it rest. Until your good is better and your better best'. These words ring around the hall at the end of each assembly. Most pupils believe in this motto and strive to achieve their best in all they do. One of the oldest pupils added, 'We really like coming to this school because you really feel at home and you learn things that will help you reach your ambitions'. Parents agree and are overwhelmingly positive about their children's education.

Pupils have made consistently good progress for a number of years. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps young children settle quickly and effortlessly into school life. This provides a good preparation for their future life and learning. In the last two years, however, an unusually high number of pupils joined in Years 5 and 6 which adversely affected results in the end of Year 6 tests in 2007. Pupils who had been at the school all the time achieved well and attained average standards overall. However, about a quarter of the pupils had joined the school in the final two years often from abroad, with limited skills in English or difficulties with learning. This group also achieved well from their generally much lower starting points because the school was good at supporting them and meeting their needs but their standards were lower. Hence, standards are broadly average but achievement is good.

All groups of pupils achieve well because the teaching is of good quality and the good curriculum captures pupils' enthusiasm and interest whatever their cultural background. This is a significant factor in raising pupils' self-esteem and underpins their good achievement. However, there are insufficient opportunities in some lessons for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to learn independently or use their initiative.

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils treat each other with great respect and willingly accept responsibility. Their enjoyment of school stems from their positive attitudes to each other, their learning and their determination to succeed. Care, guidance and support are also good. Pastoral care is outstanding and is enhanced by outstanding partnerships with the community and with outside agencies to promote learners' well-being. However, there are inconsistencies in the use of targets and the marking of pupils' work. This means that some pupils are not always aware of the implications of what they must do to improve or what the next steps in their learning might be.

Leadership and management are good. Very good leadership by the headteacher and senior management team is ensuring that every child is welcomed and included in the school's activities whatever their ability or needs. However, some subject leaders are inexperienced and monitoring is not yet as focused as it might be. The governors have reviewed their role and are increasingly effective in steering the development of the school and challenging its effectiveness. The school's good track record at adapting to change and the headteacher's very clear view of what needs to be done next means there is a good capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The quality of education in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. It is a happy and stimulating place where children make great strides in their learning. Children start school with skills and abilities that are exceptionally low. They make good progress because teaching is of good quality but few reach the goals set for the end of the reception year. The curriculum

promotes children's social, personal and emotional development extremely well because adults give them just the right mix of support and independence. The leadership of the new coordinator has transformed the quality of learning in the Foundation Stage, which was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Adults work extremely well with parents and consequently they are confident that their children are cared for well.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Provide more opportunities during lessons for pupils, especially the higher attainers, to work independently and explore their own ideas in order to sustain rapid progress.
- Ensure that marking and target setting provide pupils with a clear understanding of how they should improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. Given pupils' low starting points this reflects good achievement. Those who remain in school the full six years do considerably better than the many pupils who join late, often from overseas and speaking very little English. Those pupils who struggle with reading and writing, and those who speak English as a second language make good gains because of the focussed support they receive. In addition, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at age seven are improving, with increasing numbers achieving higher levels.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils take great pride in their school and talk enthusiastically about how teachers make learning fun. The much-improved rate of attendance is now just below average and is due mainly to the absence of some of the youngest children. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils feel safe at school and have a well-developed understanding of how to stay healthy, by eating sensibly and staying fit. They thoroughly enjoy and appreciate the clubs and activities the school offers. Behaviour is very good and the great majority of pupils show respect for the interests and feelings of the many cultures represented at the school. The energetic school council and playground friends welcome having a voice and have successfully made changes including improvements to the lunchtime salad bar and the outdoor play equipment. Pupils rapidly acquire literacy, numeracy and information and technology skills that will equip them well for later life and learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good because teachers know pupils well, have high expectations of them and plan work that matches their individual needs and capabilities. Pupils look up to their teachers and have a genuine love of learning. Most teachers, well aware of the language needs of the many Bangladeshi pupils, are good at promoting vocabulary at every opportunity. Although pupils' work is regularly marked, there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking and target setting. This means that pupils do not always understand exactly what they need to do to improve. Lesson planning, although detailed and thorough, can often be too prescriptive especially in

English, mathematics and science. While this supports less able pupils, who benefit from a helpful framework for learning, it does not give all pupils, especially the higher attainers, sufficient opportunities to use their initiative or explore their own ideas.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The newly introduced International Primary Curriculum is allowing teachers to link subjects together thematically to make tasks interesting and relevant. For example, pupils talk enthusiastically about projects such as 'Why the dinosaurs became extinct' and 'Carnival' because it captures their enthusiasm and stimulates their imaginations whatever their cultural background. An excellent range of visits and visitors to school does much to broaden pupils' social and cultural awareness. Such experiences, together with learning in personal, social and health education, and the emphasis on staying safe and healthy, teach skills that contribute well to pupils' personal development and well-being. The school is encouraging pupils to be more creative, especially through projects and topics. However, these plans do not yet include enough opportunities for pupils to work independently or explore their own ideas.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Systems for the monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress identify those who are at risk of underachieving and allow teachers to plan the necessary support. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing the quality of their own work, although the use of learning targets and feedback is not yet consistent between classes. The school's anti-bullying initiatives ensure that pupils can work together in a positive and harmonious learning environment. A few parents report concerns about behaviour, but inspectors found that pupils behave very well. The school works extremely well with a wide range of outside agencies to offer comprehensive support and guidance. Staff are clear about policies and procedures to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare and carefully implement them. The school is good at absorbing high numbers of new pupils in Key Stage 2, and quickly identifies their learning needs and supports them effectively. The support for pupils who have difficulties with learning as well as for pupils new to English is also well planned and effective in meeting their individual needs.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Very effective leadership by the headteacher and senior management team gives a clear direction to the work of the school. They have maintained a strong sense of community and teamwork so that all adults are working purposefully to improve the achievement of all pupils. The subject coordinators are working well to gain experience at evaluating the school's performance in partnership with senior managers. However, the focus for their activities could be sharper, for example, by concentrating on specific groups such as the higher attainers to ensure greater consistency in the quality of learning across classes. The recent work of the governors shows they are involved in the strategic management of the school. They are holding the school to account for its work and developing the skills to check rigorously on the school's progress.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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

03 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stewart Headlam Primary School, London, E1 5RE

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your school. We were very impressed with your friendliness and your sensible and helpful attitudes towards each other. I think that you have a good education, which prepares you very well for the next stage of your learning. Here are some of the things we liked best about your school.

- You behave very well, and you told us that you really enjoy school and have many interesting and enjoyable things to do.
- The teaching in your school is good and it means that, together with your positive attitudes to work, you make good progress.
- You understand about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and staying safe.
- You are all rightly proud of your recent carnival. We were very impressed with the costumes and your songs and dances. Well done!
- You enjoy taking on responsibility such as being playground friends and representing your classmates on the school council.
- Everyone seems to get on well together and you help and support each other well in class.

All of the adults in your school want it to be even better. To help them to do this we think that there are two things to do next.

- We are asking your teachers to give you even more opportunities during lessons to learn independently and explore your own ideas.
- You said that you found your targets were useful and they gave you something to aim for. We have asked the teachers to check to make certain that you know exactly what you have to do to improve your own work. You must promise to help as well by reading the comments they write in your books and by listening carefully to their advice.

Once again, thank you for your help during the inspection. We know you will work with your teachers to help your school to improve.

Yours sincerely,

John Earish

Lead Inspector