

St Stephen's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101142
Local Authority	Westminster
Inspection number	307601
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Lynne Kauffman

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev K Persaud
Headteacher	Mr P Voural
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2003
School address	91 Westbourne Park Road London W2 5QH
Telephone number	020 7641 4488
Fax number	020 7641 4487

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Stephen's is an average sized primary school with a nursery. Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and include an above average number of refugees and asylum seekers. A very high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school is facing many challenges including high turnover of staff and pupils, and a building in the process of remodelling, including future development of the early years. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties including struggling with basic literacy and numeracy. A minority have a physical disability, or find it difficult to conform to expected standards of behaviour. An average proportion of pupils have statements of special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Stephens School is providing a satisfactory standard of education with its sights set on improvement. It is developing a 'can do', data rich culture. Self-evaluation is good. It takes account of the school community and external agencies, such as the school's improvement partner. Parents have started to get more involved with the school, for example, through the Friends of St Stephen's. All members of the school feel valued. The leadership team and governors, supported by the local authority and diocese, have revamped the school's structures and systems. As one governor said, 'We are at the start of an exciting journey'. Recent improvements in achievement show the school is well placed to improve further.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory because, despite strengths in some areas, most aspects are satisfactory. Attendance is too low for a significant minority of pupils. The school has taken rigorous steps to improve attendance but with too little impact on this group. Pupils make good relationships with adults and their peers. They enjoy their education because of teaching that has enlivened the curriculum. They make good health choices, and know how to keep safe. Members of the school council have worked with lunchtime staff to improve the quality of meals and have introduced games for purposeful play. Slow progress in reading and writing, especially in Key Stage 1, limits pupils' preparation for their future economic well-being.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good practice in Key Stage 2. Staff recruitment and retention have been a problem but recent reviews of recruitment strategies are improving the situation. The school community works well with the parish through the active work in school involving the local minister.

Achievement across the school is satisfactory with clear improvements recently in mathematics, reading, speaking and listening. However, standards in writing and reading are still below average. Progress varies from class to class and is particularly inconsistent in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The use of assessment data across the school is inconsistent.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. The school has not been able to appoint an early years manager at present but teachers and support staff give consistency to the Foundation Stage. Children generally get off to a positive start in the Nursery. This is because appropriate attention to each of the areas of learning, and a strong focus on communication, language and literacy and personal and social development helps children to gain confidence. Children therefore gain independence, develop positive relationships and increasing confidence to explore, experiment and express their views. Outdoor activities are varied and inviting. Adults interact well with children to pursue their interests and move their learning forward. However, Reception provision does not build as well as it should on children's previous experiences in the Nursery. This is, in part, because space and opportunities for outdoor learning are limited. Focussed teaching of the basic skills takes place regularly, but the Reception classroom is not organised in a way that enables children's regular engagement in independent learning. They lack a free choice of activities, to support and extend their learning across the different areas. Staffing difficulties over the past couple of years have led to weaknesses in teachers' assessments and to restrictions in school leaders' opportunities to make all of the improvements they would have liked.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve provision in Reception to ensure greater challenge and more opportunities for independent learning.
- Work with families to improve the attendance and punctuality of a significant minority of children.
- Improve standards in reading and writing.
- Make teaching more consistent, particularly in teachers' use of assessment in their planning, especially in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start from a very low standards on entry to Nursery and make satisfactory progress. Frequent changes in staffing and inconsistent approaches to teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 have affected standards and achievement. The most recent results from Key Stage 1 show an improvement on those in 2007. This brings pupils' attainment generally in line with national averages. Progress in reading and writing is slow due to pupils' low starting points and their difficulties with English. In Key Stage 2, achievement is satisfactory and improving because teachers track progress, and provide more effectively for pupils' needs. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are set challenging targets. They make better use of literacy and mathematics across all subjects, and this accelerates their progress. Pupils who struggle with basic literacy and numeracy, and those for whom English is an additional language, make similar progress to their peers. This is because of the effective provision made to support their needs through withdrawal groups and by specialist staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils are polite, friendly and keen to chat to visitors. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy lessons and appreciate the after school activities, visits and visitors provided. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. In assembly, in classes for older pupils and when classes move around the school, behaviour is good. Relationships between pupils and with adults are good. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure, work well together and are confident that any incidents of bullying are addressed. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, supported by the strong focus on healthy eating, fitness and exercise. They make a positive contribution to the school and local parish community. They take an active lead in supporting charities, get involved in parish events and contribute well to decision-making through the school council. Despite the school's efforts to encourage and support them, a significant minority of pupils do not attend regularly or arrive at school on time, which prevents them from making the progress they should. Pupils' mature, positive attitudes prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but are too variable between classes especially in Key Stage 1 and Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1, the turnover of teachers has undermined the consistency of learning. Temporary teachers, some of them relatively inexperienced, lack the strategies to drive pupils' progress. Good teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 is the result of consistency in teaching and pupils' active involvement in their learning. Good relationships and high expectations, underpinned by the recent introduction of more effective tracking of pupils' progress, are having a good impact on planning to meet individuals' needs. However, this tracking is not used consistently across all classes. Good lessons have challenging introductory activities and use information and communication technology (ICT) well to generate interest and engage learners. Good, paired discussion helps pupils improve their communication skills, but these features are not consistent between classes. Support assistants work well in class and with small withdrawal groups. The new marking policy is having a good impact on helping pupils to improve. However, subject leaders' monitoring of books shows marking is still too variable across subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is improving. It allows more flexibility in teachers' planning. There is appropriate emphasis on the new national strategies for literacy and mathematics. The mathematics team leader has further modified the strategy to provide a programme that matches the needs of the pupils in this school. However, the curriculum for literacy has not made sufficient improvement. Imaginative cross-curricular planning is improving achievement because pupils are starting to apply their skills in other subjects. In a similar way, the clear action plans for other subjects, such as ICT, are improving learning. Science has improved through whole school planning introduced by the science team leader. Pupils enjoy a satisfactory range of activities and afterschool clubs. The 'Fit for Sport' programme is having a good impact on physical development. Work seen in Year 6, led by a theatre group, is developing independence and creativity through dance and drama. However, the library is not used enough to enrich learning. Good work in social, personal and health education is boosting pupils' confidence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Sound induction procedures and a welcoming ethos enable children joining the Foundation Stage and other year groups to settle happily into school. Pupils in Year 6 confidently approach secondary transfer because they participate in events organised by their own school in conjunction with local secondary schools. Pupils feel valued and they and their families are well supported in resolving any personal difficulties. Child protection procedures and risk assessments are securely in place. Pupils' views are used and their efforts and achievements are celebrated and rewarded, thereby raising their self-esteem. New systems put in place have begun to increase pupils' awareness of how to improve their learning and raise awareness of their targets for improvement. However, there has been little time to embed these initiatives so practice is still inconsistent. Systems for safeguarding pupils are secure and meet government requirements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have established a successful strategic drive to improve teaching and learning. Staff and governors share a common unity of purpose because the leadership team have involved governors more closely in the challenges the school must meet. Regular meetings, systems for monitoring and good self-evaluation are having a positive impact on raising standards. The school consults with the local authority and the diocese who contribute well to the school's improvement. However, the involvement of parents and pupils in the development of the school has been an area of difficulty to be further developed. The leadership has effectively tackled the issues from the 2003 inspection. Good systems for accurate self-evaluation, focused monitoring of data to track pupils' progress, plus positive leadership from the senior leaders and governors give the school good capacity for improvement.

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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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

18 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Stephen's Church of England Primary School, London, W2 5QH

You may remember that recently I visited your school with my colleague to see how you were getting on with your work. Thank you for making us so welcome, it was great to see so many smiling faces around the school. We particularly enjoyed sharing the new lunchtime menu created by your chef with help from the school council, using your ideas - it was delicious! We were delighted to see so many books and displays showing how hard you are trying to improve your work. Keep it up!

We were in school for two days and at the end of that time, we spoke with your headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the governors and some other special visitors to explain what we had seen. We agree with what the school thinks about itself, which shows that your school is a satisfactory school with lots of new ideas that are helping you to improve. An example is your personal target card, which some of you knew off by heart. Some of your parents were part of the school evaluation, so they are able to add their thoughts about the school. The school hopes more parents will get involved in the future development of the school.

There are strengths in school helping you to learn but there are also some areas to improve.

- It is important that some of you who are late for school, or perhaps do not come to school on some days, remind your parents how much you will fall behind in your work when you do not attend regularly.
- You must keep trying hard with your literacy work, especially reading and writing. Try to do some reading at home!
- Reception needs better resources and space for play to help learning.
- Your headteacher and deputy headteacher are going to continue to help your teachers to improve how they keep track of how you are doing, so they can plan to help you learn more.

We would like to give you our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Lynne Kauffman

Lead Inspector