

Mount Stewart Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101500
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	307711
Inspection date	15 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Margaret Goodchild

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	359
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Simon Graves
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Redfern
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2004
School address	Mount Stewart Avenue Kenton Harrow HA3 0JX
Telephone number	020 8907 1977
Fax number	020 8909 1512

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how well pupils achieve, teaching, the use of assessment information, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from observing teaching and learning, meeting with staff and pupils, and scrutinising the school's assessment and tracking records and other documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessment, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This large junior school is situated in Kenton, on the borders of Brent and Harrow. The percentage of pupils of minority ethnic heritage is exceptionally high, as is the percentage for whom English is an additional language. Most of the pupils are of Asian or Asian British origin and about a third of pupils are at early stages of acquiring English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage with a statement of special educational needs is average. There are fewer other pupils with learning difficulties than in schools nationally. Most of these have general learning difficulties, speech and language difficulties or emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average. The school has gained Healthy Schools status, Investors in People, the National School Sport Strategy Award and PE Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The staff and governors rightly judge that this is a good school. It is a very popular choice with parents and consistently oversubscribed.

Pupils achieve well and the school has sustained high standards since the last inspection. National test results in Year 6 have been consistently at least above average and often well above average in recent years. The progress of pupils who took the national tests in 2007 was good in reading and mathematics and satisfactory in writing. The school has been working to raise standards in writing, particularly to increase the proportion of pupils gaining the highest levels. This is beginning to have a positive effect on standards, however, progress in writing remains satisfactory overall. Standards are above average in science and in information and communication technology (ICT). There are no significant differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils although those of Asian heritage and for whom English is an additional language reach higher standards than other minority ethnic groups in the national tests. Currently, standards are above average overall with some pupils working at exceptionally high levels.

Pupils make good progress in response to good teaching and a curriculum matched well to their learning needs. Lessons are generally planned well and teachers provide plenty of opportunity for pupils to work in pairs and to discuss their learning. This particularly benefits those pupils who are at early stages in acquiring English. Behaviour is usually managed very effectively, and teaching assistants make a good contribution to the progress of pupils who need additional help. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards and a significant improvement in the quality and range of resources provided means that ICT supports pupils' learning well.

There are some good examples of pupils extending their writing skills through other subjects, particularly in humanities, and undertaking open-ended research projects that develop their independent learning skills. Occasionally, in humanities more able pupils do not have tasks that provide sufficient scope for them to present their ideas in writing and homework tasks in English are not matched to the needs of different groups of pupils as well as they should be. Pupils who are gifted in mathematics have good opportunities to extend their understanding through additional activities and the school has reached the finals of the Mathematics Challenge. The school has good links with a local high school for music and dance, and a good range of sporting and musical activities provides well for pupils with talents in these areas. There have been opportunities in the past for pupils gifted in writing to develop their skills through working on a school magazine but there are currently no activities of this kind.

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and attendance is above average. Behaviour is good overall and some pupils behave exceptionally well. Pupils apply themselves well and are eager to contribute their ideas. They are friendly, polite and helpful. They increasingly take responsibilities as they move up the school, for instance as buddies in the playground, and take their role as representatives on the school council very seriously. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and their wider awareness is being developed through a link with a school in South Africa.

The school ensures that pupils are well cared for, protected and kept safe. Those who need additional help with their learning receive good support and the school works well with other agencies. Pupils' attainment is regularly assessed and their achievement is tracked carefully to

see how well they are doing. The school is quick to put in place additional support for pupils who are making less progress than expected and it has effective systems in place to keep their progress under review. Pupils are increasingly being involved in assessing their own work and that of others. They say that they are clear about how to improve their work and they are able to talk in detail, for instance, about what they need to do to improve their writing.

Parents are generally satisfied with the school's work and some are delighted with the provision it makes. Many parents are very ambitious for their children and a number express a desire to be more closely informed about how much progress their children are making. Overall, the school has satisfactory systems in place for keeping parents informed. Parents' views are gathered through regular surveys and there is a parents' association, though it has few active members. There is scope, however, to develop a closer partnership with parents, especially given their keen interest in their children's education.

The school is led and managed well. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and effective systems are in place to sustain high standards and ensure that the school continues to improve. Self-evaluation is accurate and senior leaders analyse data very thoroughly. They use information from this well to judge the school's effectiveness, set targets and identify the right priorities for development. The quality of education is checked regularly through looking at pupils' work, teachers' planning and through lesson observation. Subject leaders are involved appropriately in this process and less experienced teachers are supported well. Staff have good opportunities to develop their skills through training and leaders are clear about what is working well and what could be improved. Monitoring and staff development are not focused as strategically as they could be, however, on identifying opportunities to move the school from good to outstanding. Governors are supportive and increasingly challenge the school's work, for instance, through the links they have forged with subjects.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that writing in all subjects, and for homework, builds on pupils' existing skills, and increase opportunities beyond the classroom for pupils who are gifted writers.
- Sharpen monitoring and staff development to concentrate particularly on those features that would move this from a good to an outstanding school, and involve parents more closely as partners in school 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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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	2
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

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?	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

27 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mount Stewart Junior School, Harrow, HA3 0JX

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. I enjoyed coming into your lessons and looking at the work you were doing, and I was very impressed by the pupils who talked to me and shared their views about the school. These are the main things I found out about your school.

- This is a good school that helps you to reach high standards.
- You are making good progress, especially in reading, mathematics.
- You behave well and many of you are extremely sensible and well behaved.
- You get on well together and say that you enjoy school.
- You attend regularly and are eager to learn.
- Teaching is good and the staff make sure that you are well looked after.
- They keep a careful check on how well you are doing and all those I spoke to were clear about their targets and knew how to improve their work.

The headteacher and other staff are keen to make the school even better for you. I have asked them to do this by:

- helping you to make even better progress with your writing
- thinking very carefully about what would need to be changed to make this an outstanding school, and getting parents more involved in improving the school.

You can help them by always doing your best - as I'm sure you will - and I hope you continue to enjoy your time at the school.

Yours sincerely

Ms M J Goodchild

Lead Inspector