

# Little Stanmore Nursery, First and Middle School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102188
<b>Local Authority</b>	Harrow
<b>Inspection number</b>	307923
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Steven Hill

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>	Middle deemed primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–12
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	272
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Miss Jill Palmer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Suzanne Kushner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2006
<b>School address</b>	St David's Drive Edgeware Middlesex HA8 6JH
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8952 3272
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<b>Age group</b>	3–12
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

### Description of the school

Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, with none predominating. About two-thirds of pupils speak English as an additional language. Forty-seven pupils are refugees or asylum seekers. There are very high levels of mobility, with a high proportion of pupils coming into different classes with little experience of speaking English, and some with little experience of school. Free school meals figures are very high. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties or disabilities varies enormously, and the figure is very high in some year groups. The most common problems are with basic literacy and numeracy, but a number of pupils have behavioural or emotional problems, some have language and communication difficulties, and a few are on the autistic spectrum.

Since the last inspection, there have been two changes of headship, and the current headteacher, who only started in May this year, was absent during the inspection. Two assistant heads managed the school, as they have at several junctures in the last few years. There have been extensive changes in other teaching staff in the last two years.

### Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school is providing a satisfactory education, as it did at the last inspection. This has been possible because, despite extensive staffing changes, the governing body and the two acting headteachers have worked hard to provide continuity and direction to colleagues.

Children come into the Foundation Stage with standards that are well below those expected. They make satisfactory progress across the school, but this is variable between different classes and subjects. Progress has also varied hugely from year to year. For example, the pupils who took national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2006 made very good progress from Year 2. However, those who took the test in 2007 had made poor progress. This latter group have since made exceptionally good progress in Year 7, because of strong teaching in this class, and have made up a lot of lost ground. The current pupils in Year 6 have shown broadly average rates of progress during their time in Key Stage 2. Standards are rising, but remain low throughout the school, and are exceptionally low in some year groups. An exception is in information and communication technology (ICT), where pupils make good progress, and have good skills by Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory overall, as is the quality of teaching, but there are inconsistencies in both.

In most lessons, pupils behave well because of well-established routines and good relationships with their teachers. The school has introduced very good systems to keep track of how pupils are doing in English and mathematics. This helps teachers to plan work that matches pupils' individual needs, a process that is improving in most classes. However, the implementation varies considerably and, in some lessons, pupils are given work that is too easy for them, so they do not make the progress of which they are capable. Very occasionally, work is too hard for many pupils, or is not properly explained, and then some lose interest and concentration.

Pupils enjoy school and feel safe and secure. They have good relationships with each other and with staff, and the school is a friendly, racially harmonious setting for learning. Pupils have a good knowledge of healthy lifestyles. Behaviour is satisfactory and, in most situations, pupils behave well. However, there are still rare occasions when silly behaviour slows progress in lessons, and sometimes over-boisterous behaviour in the playground can be intimidating to younger pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Illness and changes of teaching staff have slowed improvements since the last inspection. Staffing is now more settled, so the school is in a sound position to improve further. Subject leaders are keen to support colleagues, but do not have enough opportunities to monitor progress and provision in different classes, to direct their support where it is most valuable. The school has employed specialist support to help pupils for whom English is an additional language. This is effective and enables these pupils to make good progress in withdrawal groups. However, the school does not have enough established systems in place to help other pupils who are falling behind with their work, or who might have specific needs, such as dyslexia. The teaching assistants often provide effective support in class to pupils who struggle with basic literacy or numeracy.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children start in the Nursery with attainment that is well below national expectations. They make satisfactory progress but, by the end of the Reception year, standards remain well below

those found nationally. There are particular weaknesses in children's knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, reading and linking sounds and letters. Children join in the range of activities provided with enthusiasm and particularly enjoy undertaking practical activities, for example, to explore the concept of 'floating and sinking'. Behaviour is good and children enjoy each other's company. The adults interact well with the children and help to make learning fun. There are established systems to ensure that all children have equal access to activities and use of equipment. However, the layout of the indoor environment detracts from the effectiveness of direct teaching sessions. This is particularly true when pupils in different groups do different activities, and can distract each other. There are not enough displays of children's work and learning resources to make the learning environment really interesting or exciting. Staff have accurately identified that the quality of the outdoor play area does not sufficiently stimulate children's imaginative play.

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

- Improve achievement by making teaching more consistent, particularly in matching work to pupils' needs.
- Improve provision and resources in the Foundation Stage.
- Provide more structured systems to support those pupils who are identified as not making sufficient progress.
- Involve subject leaders more in monitoring provision and progress in their subjects.

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**

Achievement is satisfactory, but varies considerably from class to class. Pupils who are new to speaking English learn the language quickly, and are able to make the same progress as their classmates. Pupils who struggle with literacy and numeracy usually get good support in class from teaching assistants, which helps them to make satisfactory progress in the light of their difficulties. Standards are exceptionally low overall. However, the pupils in Years 6 and 7 have made particularly good progress in the last year, and their attainment is closer to the levels found nationally. Increasingly effective links with the adjacent special school are helping to provide expertise to help some pupils with specific problems, such as autism, to make satisfactory progress. Pupils make good progress in developing ICT skills, because of the many opportunities provided in different subjects.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils like school, as was evident from their positive views. 'We learn a lot...' and, 'School is fun...' because '...we do art and go on trips,' are typical. They particularly enjoy the range of extra-curricular activities provided, especially in sport. They get on well together, Year 6 pupils agreeing that 'Everybody's there for everybody.' Boys and girls from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds work and play together happily. Pupils feel safe and they trust the adults to look after them and deal with any problems. They have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and make healthy choices at snack or mealtimes. Behaviour is satisfactory and is improving, being '...way better!' by '...100%',

according to older pupils. Pupils undertake some responsible roles through membership of the school council, which helps them make a sound contribution to the school community. However, their contributions to the wider, local community are limited. Attendance is satisfactory and improving, although it is below the national average. Pupils' sound progress and positive attitudes to learning mean they are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives, in school and beyond.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is satisfactory overall but has many inconsistencies, varying from outstanding to inadequate in individual lessons. Teachers generally manage classes well, so that lessons are calm and pupils are able to learn in a positive atmosphere. Behaviour in lessons is usually good, because pupils like and trust their teachers, who they say make subjects fun. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to clarify their explanations and generate enthusiasm. Planning is increasingly thorough. Pupils are given good opportunities to use ICT themselves across the curriculum. There are some examples of the good use of strategies to help all pupils to be actively involved in the lesson, such as discussing work in pairs. However, not enough use is made of such strategies throughout the school. Subject knowledge is generally good, although sometimes weaknesses in particular elements can slow the pace of learning, so that pupils' concentration deteriorates.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum gives appropriate emphasis to literacy and numeracy, and the school makes satisfactory use of cross-curricular links to apply these skills in other subjects. The regular use of computers enables pupils to develop their ICT skills well. There is a strong focus on creativity and this helps to stimulate pupils' interest in their lessons. There is a satisfactory programme of personal, social and health education, which supports pupils' personal development. The newly established Year 6 residential trip, to Osmington Bay, helped to develop pupils' personal and social skills through challenges such as archery, abseiling and night hikes. However, not all pupils yet take part in such visits. Pupils in other year groups benefit from visits to places of local interest such as the church and the local mosque. There is a satisfactory range of sporting activities, such as football and rounders, for older pupils to take part in after school.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The adults are careful to ensure that all pupils are happy and settled in school. Proper procedures are in place to assess risks and to safeguard learners. Child protection procedures are robust, as are those for health and safety. Staff liaise suitably with external professionals in addressing the needs of vulnerable pupils. Pupils with a variety of learning difficulties and disabilities, and those new to the school or to speaking English, have good pastoral support to help them to take a full part in school life. Their academic support, particularly from teaching assistants in lessons, helps them make satisfactory progress. Pupils who have specific emotional or behavioural problems are given good support, so they and their classmates are usually able to get on with

learning. Very occasionally, however, these pupils struggle to conform, and this can slow progress in a tiny number of lessons.

The progress of individuals is tracked increasingly thoroughly in English and mathematics. However, the school lacks established intervention systems, to help pupils who are identified as falling behind to catch up again. The setting of individual targets for pupils to help them make progress is weak, although there are examples of good practice. The quality of marking is variable and does not often identify what pupils are to do to move to the next stage in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

In the last two years, significant changes in senior leadership, and extensive changes in teaching staff, have often interrupted the pace and direction of change. Progress since the last inspection has been variable as a result, but satisfactory overall. After a dip in standards and achievement, they are now improving, dramatically so in Years 6 and 7. The two assistant headteachers have often had to step into the breach and have provided much needed continuity in ethos and direction for staff and pupils. Monitoring of teaching, making good use of expertise from the local authority, has helped teachers to improve their practice. However, the subject leaders have had too little opportunity to contribute to this. Better tracking systems have been devised that give a clearer overview of pupils' progress, but the school has not developed a systematic range of strategies, which it could use to intervene when issues arise.

Governors have a very clear understanding of the work of the school. They have worked hard to extend their expertise so that they can support and challenge the school more effectively. They have resolved a budget deficit and have worked with the headteacher to ensure that the school has a much more stable staffing structure from September.

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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?	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	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
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	3
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

<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>	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	3
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

17 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Little Stanmore Nursery, First and Middle School, Middlesex, HA8 6JH

Thank you for your friendly welcome and all your help when we visited your school. We think it is providing a satisfactory education for you. We were pleased to see that you enjoy school and that you all get along so well together. Your school has had many changes recently, but the teachers have made sure that you still make satisfactory progress in your lessons. You have learned a lot about how to stay healthy, and you are good at using ICT. Occasionally, the teachers give some of you work that is too easy, or too hard, and we have agreed that they will work together to make sure everyone gets work that is just right for them in future.

You get on well with your teachers, you are usually well behaved in class, and you try hard to do well. When you are outside, you all play happily together, but sometimes the older pupils are a bit careless when they are chasing about, and this can worry some of the younger ones. The school keeps a careful eye on how you are getting on, and can quickly spot if anyone is falling behind. We have suggested that they should have some better systems in place, so that pupils who are having problems can be given the right help straight away.

Children get off to a happy start in the Foundation Stage, but we have agreed with the adults that parts of it need to be made more interesting and exciting, especially outdoors, so that the children will learn more quickly. The teachers are all keen to help you learn more and this year some of the senior staff have been going into lessons, so they can give teachers tips on how to help you learn more. We have suggested that more of the teachers have a chance to visit each other's classes, so they can help you to get better in all the different subjects.

Thank you again for your help and I hope you carry on enjoying school. You can all help the school to improve by working hard. You older ones also need to make sure you are careful of the smaller children when you are playing, so that everyone enjoys school all the time.

Yours sincerely

Steven Hill

Lead Inspector