

Stamshaw Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116211
Local Authority	Portsmouth
Inspection number	312216
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Michelle Love
Headteacher	Mrs Jo Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
School address	North End Avenue North End Portsmouth PO2 8NW
Telephone number	023 9266 1192
Fax number	023 9266 6937

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Stamshaw is a popular two form entry infant school, which has received official Children's Centre designation. There has been some disruption to staffing, leadership and management in recent years. A higher than average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. These pupils have a variety of needs, the main ones being moderate learning and speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has Healthy Schools, Activemark, Investors in People and Financial Management Standard awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Stamshaw Infant School is a good school. There is now a strong leadership team, which, over the last year, has brought stability to the school, raised staff morale and set its sights clearly on raising achievement and standards. The pastoral care for pupils and their personal development are both outstanding. Excellent links with parents, other schools and agencies contribute to these. Parents have positive views of the school, as one commented, 'We find Stamshaw Infant School extremely welcoming, with a friendly and calm atmosphere. The staff are very approachable and supportive towards the parents as well as the children.' The daily ten minute session before school, when many parents and carers share with their children what they have been doing in school and have opportunities to chat with staff, is a testimony to this. Well-attended workshops encourage parents to play a full part in their children's education. Some were amazed at Year 1 pupils' well developed computer skills.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They particularly enjoy the wide range of sports activities, provided as part of an extremely well enriched curriculum. Along with a very good knowledge of what constitutes a healthy diet, this encourages pupils to think about the importance of healthy lifestyles. Pupils recall the 'Circus Week' with great pleasure. They learnt different skills, which boosted their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils behave well and have very positive attitudes to learning. The school has a consistent approach to managing behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to recognise the consequences of both good and inappropriate behaviour through classroom 'behaviour boards'. As a result, behaviour has improved and is now very good. Along with very positive attitudes to learning, this contributes to the good progress pupils make throughout the school. The use of targets for pupils to aim for, with weekly opportunities for Reception and Year 1 pupils to focus on these and evaluate how well they are doing, helps to encourage these attitudes.

Assessments at the end of Year 2 show that standards in writing and mathematics are average. Standards in reading have improved considerably and are above average, with almost a third of pupils reaching the higher level. This improvement has been brought about through the introduction of a structured phonics programme and guided reading workshops, which have helped pupils to become more confident in their reading. Increased parental support for children's reading has also aided improvement. The school has started to take action to raise standards in writing and mathematics, particularly for more able pupils. This has met with some success in Reception and Year 1 and increased proportions of Year 1 pupils are now on track to reach higher levels at the end of Year 2. Although pupils generally make good progress in Year 2, and standards in mathematics are rising, some lack of subject knowledge and challenge for more able pupils impact on the standards achieved in writing and mathematics.

The school has very good systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. Any underachievement is quickly identified and additional support provided. Teachers are now more accountable for pupils' progress and are aware of the range of ability within their classes, helping them to plan accordingly. This has improved the quality of teaching and learning, which is now good overall. Given this improvement and the good progress now made by pupils, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

'My daughter has really enjoyed her first year in school. The staff have brought out the best in her and given her a great start to her school life'. This comment, from a parent, sums up the good start that children receive in Reception. Children's attainment on entry is below that expected for their age, especially in aspects of communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and mathematical development. They make good progress and, by the end of Reception, most children are working securely within the different areas of learning, with some meeting or exceeding the expected goals. They make excellent progress in their personal and social skills, and in linking sounds and letters. This progress is due to staff effectively using their observations and assessments to identify and support children's varying needs. Staff work very well together as a team to provide a safe, secure and vibrant learning environment. However, the use of the outdoor area to extend children's interests and skills in the different areas of learning is not yet fully explored. The support and guidance offered to parents to become involved in their children's learning is very effective, for example the workshop and DVD to introduce 'letters and sounds'. The excellent links with the on site Nursery and other childcare providers help children to settle quickly into school. The Foundation stage leader is effective in using her specialist knowledge and enthusiasm to make improvements to the provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics by developing teachers' subject knowledge and increasing the challenge for more able pupils, especially in Year 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well to reach average standards at the end of Year 2. Very good support for pupils with particular learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them, along with other pupils, to make good progress. The school identified that too few pupils were attaining higher levels in writing and mathematics, following its success in raising reading standards. Careful tracking of progress through evaluating samples of writing each half term and encouragement to write at home through 'writing bags' are helping to address this, particularly in Reception and Year 1. Additional focused support in mathematics for more able pupils has proved effective in Year 1. The school is planning to develop this practice in Year 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They develop an excellent understanding and respect for differences through attending workshops, such as the one on disability and differences. Very good behaviour helps to create a calm and well-ordered learning environment. Pupils enjoy coming to school. The school has worked tirelessly to improve the rate of attendance, which is now in line with the national average. Pupils are extremely well aware of safety issues and they speak knowledgeably about their 'bus walk', when learning about road safety and the impact of traffic. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to their school and the wider community. They take on responsibilities as council members and classroom helpers and raise funds for the school and charities. The school council is proud of its contribution to improved lunchtime behaviour through, for example, setting up the 'rainbow

table' for particularly well behaved pupils. Pupils' good progress in acquiring literacy, numeracy and computer skills, along with the high level of their personal development, prepares them well for their future life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good relationships with their classes so that pupils are generally keen to learn. Lessons have clear learning intentions, which are shared with pupils so that they know what they are aiming to achieve. Pupils are well managed because there are clear expectations about their behaviour. Teaching assistants provide confident and competent support for the pupils with whom they work. Good use is made of interactive white boards to introduce lessons and enliven pupils' learning. Teachers use assessment information well to identify ability groups within classes and generally plan appropriate activities for these groups. However, some lack of subject knowledge and challenge, especially in Year 2, at times restricts the progress made by more able pupils in writing and mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum effectively promotes pupils' personal and academic development. There is a strong focus on raising achievement in basic skills along with ensuring that all become confident learners. The work done in the 'rainbow room' is a good example of this, where children receive excellent support to raise their confidence and self-esteem, as well as to extend their academic skills. The school has made significant improvements in the way that information and communication technology is used to support pupils' learning, particularly in developing writing. The school is beginning to develop links between different subjects to make the curriculum more creative, and to add further enjoyment, interest and relevance to pupils' learning. It recognises that there is still more to do in this area. The curriculum is extremely well enriched through the very wide range of clubs, visits, visitors and events, which further widen children's horizons and contribute to their personal and social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The procedures to protect and safeguard pupils are rigorous and meet statutory requirements. Strategies, such as the use of 'parent power' workshops and discussion time at the start of the school day, are used extremely well to support and involve parents. The support offered to children and families who are facing difficulties in their lives is outstanding. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who have English as an additional language, is very good. These pupils make very good and in some cases excellent progress towards their specific targets. For example, pupils with speech and language difficulties make excellent progress because of the focused support they receive from specially trained teaching assistants. Strategies to support those with moderate learning difficulties are very effective in accelerating the progress of this group. The school has rigorous systems in place to monitor and track pupil's academic progress. Opportunities to evaluate learning and to work on individual targets provide very good guidance for pupils in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, deputies and senior management team have an accurate view of the school and they evaluate their work well. The school has identified areas for improvement and has taken successful action on them. Monitoring and evaluation ensure that the school has a clear view of the progress of groups of pupils, the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, and the effectiveness of its interventions on pupils' progress. Where teaching has been weaker, a range of support has been put in place, which has improved the overall quality. However, actions to raise teachers' expectations of more able pupils, especially in Year 2, have yet to show full effect. Governors are very supportive of the school and are aware of its strengths and the need to continue to raise standards.

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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?	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 ¹ 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	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?	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.

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

03 September 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Stamshaw Infant School, Portsmouth, PO2 8NW

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and you were interesting to talk to, very polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. Stamshaw Infant is a good school.

We liked these things the most.

- You enjoy school, behave very well and want to do your best.
- Children in Early Years get a very good start to their time in school.
- The school supports you extremely well when you have problems or find learning difficult. The Rainbow Room looks to be a very special place.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and very well looked after.
- You have a very good range of clubs to choose from, go on lots of visits and have special events such as the Circus Week.
- You know the importance of eating the right things and staying fit and healthy.
- You are very keen to take on responsibilities. It was good to see the school council helping to make behaviour better at lunchtime.
- The staff are extremely welcoming to your parents and encourage them to support you in all that you do in school. It was good to see so many of you showing your mums and dads what you are doing in school at the start of the day.
- Your headteacher and staff have worked particularly hard over the last year and are keen that you should all do your very best.

We have asked the school to work particularly on the following thing.

- You are doing particularly well in reading. The school now needs to make sure that you all do as well in writing and mathematics. Your teachers need to make sure that those of you who find learning easier, especially those in Year 2, are given work that makes you think more, so that you do even better.

You can help by making sure you all work as hard as possible, whilst also continuing to enjoy school. We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector