

# St Stephen's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100621
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lambeth
<b>Inspection number</b>	323317
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Wendy Simmons

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	205
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	25
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Bill Wilson (acting)
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Louise Salewski
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 May 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Dorset Road London SW8 1EJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7735 1023
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7587 0073

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 January 2009
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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 school, which is close to the Oval cricket ground in the Vauxhall area of London. It educates pupils from a very wide range of social and cultural backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than is found in most schools. One third of all pupils come from Black African heritages. The next largest groups are from White, Portuguese and Black Caribbean heritages. The number of pupils that join and leave throughout the school year is much higher than usual and it is not unusual for new pupils to have little or no English. Close to half of all pupils receive free school meals.

A higher than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils' difficulties mostly relate to moderate learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorder, although a notable proportion have behavioural or communication difficulties. Several children have very complex needs and have a statement of special education needs. The school has a Children's Centre, which is managed by the school's governing body. This provides a crand;egrave;che, adult learning facilities, and access to midwifery services and a breakfast and after-school club. The Children's Centre was inspected only a few weeks before the school's inspection. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is made up of a Nursery and a Reception class. The school has experienced difficulties in recruiting teachers; this has now been resolved.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Stephen's is a very happy school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The school is improving quickly, as is evident in the way that standards are rising. Pupils and staff are friendly and welcoming, and pupils are well cared for in a nurturing and very inclusive environment. In the words of one parent, 'There is a family feeling.' In particular, relationships are outstanding, and these help to ensure that there is a very strong partnership with parents and carers, which helps pupils to be happy at school and gain a suitable range of skills for their future lives. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and said, 'Teachers are very open and everyone is there for you' and, 'It's a lovely school'.

The headteacher and assistant headteachers are effective and are working hard to improve standards. Teamwork is very strong. All staff are very committed to the pupils and the further development of the school. Governors and middle managers are enthusiastic and very committed to developing their roles. However, there is still more to do to ensure that they are fully involved in helping to sharply evaluate the quality of the school's overall provision. For example, some leaders do not have a clear and fully accurate picture about the quality of teaching and learning in their area of responsibility.

The senior leadership team has successfully strengthened and stabilised the teaching team in the last two years. As a result, teaching and learning are now satisfactory, and this enables pupils to achieve at least satisfactorily whatever their background or specific need. From children's often very low starting points they make steady progress in learning new things. This means that by the end of Year 6, standards, although being lower than average, are not exceptionally low. The good focus on promoting pupils' speaking skills aids all pupils and is especially helpful for pupils learning English as an additional language. The leadership and provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is especially strong and this means that this group makes good progress.

Standards are improving in all year groups, and to lift this still further the school acknowledges that a priority for development is to secure consistently good teaching. As one governor noted, 'With the changes in staffing, children have an increasing thirst for knowledge and the school is facilitating this.' The curriculum is satisfactory. The school is currently working successfully on improving mathematics, as standards in the past had been too low. There is still more to do; the senior management team knows that not all pupils have a secure understanding of basic mathematical facts, and also recognises that pupils do not do enough real-life mathematical problem-solving activities. Standards in writing are improving. The school allocates a good amount of time to helping pupils with their speaking and reading skills. However, not enough time is provided for pupils to write and then edit, extend and improve their work. Actions are being taken to improve science, but opportunities are missed for pupils to do independent experiments and investigations.

Pupils' personal development is a major strength of the school. In particular, pupils develop a strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. This helps them to behave well and show respect for others. Pupils benefit from learning how to be fit, healthy and safe in the world around them.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

In the last year, the quality of provision has improved from satisfactory to good; this reflects the improvement in teaching and learning and the effect of good leadership. There are very clear signs that standards are rising well. By the end of the EYFS, standards have risen from an exceptionally low point in 2007 to become closer to average in 2008. Children make good overall progress, and this is especially so in the way that they gain important speaking, reading and social skills.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Activities are interesting, and teachers work very hard to get children to talk about what they are doing and express their ideas with confidence - for example, when talking about the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. Role play and dressing up are not always used to the very best effect to widen children's skills still further. Children work well in groups, and they show growing independence. Adults have developed useful ways of checking children's progress, and this helps them to plan the next steps of children's learning well. There is a good emphasis on learning letters and sounds (phonics), and children are applying these confidently when reading. However, writing is underdeveloped. Children can count simply, and they enjoy problem solving, physical challenges and creative activities. They have good access to outside learning activities. Relationships are outstanding. Children are treated as individuals, and this starts immediately when they are visited at home before joining the school; parents and carers value this. Children's welfare and daily care are good, which ensures that they settle quickly and happily into school. Staff provide plenty of encouragement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Lift the overall quality of teaching and learning to at least good.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills, do real-life mathematical problem solving and scientific investigations.
- Sharpen the roles of leaders, especially middle managers and governors, in evaluating the work of the school.

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

Standards are on track to be higher in 2009, by the end of Years 2 and 6, than they were in 2008. In 2008, standards were too low and were adversely affected by some past weak teaching, when pupils did not make the progress that they should have done in writing, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils who are likely to gain the expected levels in English, mathematics and science in 2009 national tests is well on track to be met. This continues the trend for improvement, which was evident in 2006 and 2007. Pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress, and overall achievement is satisfactory. The school is working successfully to help boys to do as well as girls. For example, pupils, especially boys in Year 1, were thrilled to act as Superheroes to help them with their writing. Leaders and staff are correctly working on improving mathematics, science and writing in their drive to lift standards and achievement from satisfactory towards good.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils are happy at school; they are lively, friendly, helpful and well-behaved. They are keen to share their ideas, and cooperate well when working in groups. Pupils have a strong spiritual awareness and can explain why prayers are important. They know about different faiths, and assemblies contribute well to their all-round development. Pupils show respect for others' cultures and religious beliefs. They enjoy such things as Carnival Week, when they make their own costumes and parade in the local streets. This helps to promote community cohesion well. They take an active part in caring for their environment, and share their musical talents. Pupils enjoy a good range of sports, which help them to develop their fitness. They have a good sense of how to eat healthily and it was very pleasing to see pupils serving salads to their friends at lunchtime. Leaders have worked hard to develop attendance so that it is above average. They recognise that pupils' writing and problem-solving skills are still areas for development in the drive to further improve their life skills and promote their future economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teachers have excellent relationships with the pupils, and are very keen for them to do well. Pupils work hard and are mostly extremely willing and enthusiastic learners. Teaching assistants give good support and contribute effectively to pupils' progress, particularly that of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Adults place a strong emphasis on helping pupils to speak with growing confidence and accuracy. Teachers have a good and increasing knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They fully recognise that pupils need more help in understanding place value in mathematics and in helping them to record each step of their mathematical problem-solving methods in a clear way. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly, but sometimes they do not plan a suitable variety of tasks for pupils' different abilities. There is room for greater use of individual investigation activities. However, teachers use good strategies to keep pupils on task with their work, and as a result, pupils behave well, concentrate and persevere with tasks. There are missed opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to aid their learning and independent work. The overuse of worksheets hampers independent recording of ideas.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The school has gained a Healthy School Award, which reflects the school's good emphasis on helping pupils to adopt fit and healthy lifestyles. The curriculum focuses well on helping pupils to know how to cope with dangers in the locality in which they live, and helpful guidance and support from the police and other community organisations aid this. The school provides a good range of extra activities for pupils, including growing vegetables and looking after their own chickens, which help them to understand where their food comes from. Pupils enjoy a good range of visits; for example, they develop their social skills during residential visits, and visiting a new area of Britain helps them to understand about the world in which they live. Music is well promoted. The improved emphasis on phonics is aiding reading, and a new curriculum programme and a wider range of reading books is having a positive impact on standards and achievement. The school allocates a good amount of time to helping pupils with

their speaking and reading skills, but not enough time is provided for pupils to write in a range of subjects. The school recognises that there is still more to do to improve opportunities for pupils to do problem solving in mathematics and science. They are well on the way, with such things as 'Maths Challenge Week'.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The pastoral care given to pupils is very good; adults support pupils enthusiastically and demonstrate a high level of commitment. The support provided for parents and carers is also of a very high standard. The work of the learning mentor contributes greatly to the support that is given. The introduction of new support systems for Portuguese families is very effective and contributes to pupils' improving achievement and good community cohesion. The leadership of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is especially strong. As a result, this helps pupils to develop the skills needed to do well at school. For example, the school provides exemplary, special 'Support Bags'. These are filled with resources for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder to use to help them to overcome anxiety and cope with situations that they find difficult. The school has good systems in place to check pupils' progress, and it has introduced a good range of extra support initiatives for pupils who have made slower progress in the past. Pupils know their targets for improvement. The quality of written marking is inconsistent, and too often pupils are not given enough time to act on the suggestions that teachers make, for example in editing, extending and improving their writing so that more of them can reach higher standards.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The improvement in standards has resulted from the appointment of new permanent staff, an improved curriculum, and increased support and guidance for pupils. These initiatives have been well managed by the headteacher and the assistant headteachers. The senior staff complement each other, and they share their talents well for the benefit of the pupils and their families, and to aid staff development. They are highly respected, and this is helping them to initiate new ideas and affect change. Challenging target setting, appropriately high expectations and satisfactory development planning are aiding school improvement. The school has a sound capacity to improve still further. The governors and middle managers are widening their roles and becoming increasingly involved in analysing information about standards, achievement and the quality of teaching in the school. However, there is still more to do on this, so that they have an even sharper and more precise view of the school's effectiveness. For example, some governors are very new to their roles and are still becoming familiar with how to evaluate standards and achievement. Middle managers are not yet as fully involved in evaluating the quality of teaching, learning and achievement as they could be. The sharp analysis of data needs embedding at all levels to help leaders with their evaluations.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	2

## 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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	3
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

03 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Stephen's Church of England Primary School, London, SW8 1EJ

You may remember that two inspectors came to your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly and telling us about your school. It was lovely to meet you. From the moment that we walked into your school we felt that was a happy and caring place. You also agree with us and say that 'It is a lovely school'.

Your school is satisfactory overall. This means that most things are suitable, some things are particularly good, and a few areas need to be better. Your school has improved in the last year because your headteacher and other adults have been busy trying to make it better for you, and also because you are working hard. We know that you like your teachers, and they are working hard to help you to learn new things in a steady way. This means that most of you are now able to do the things that we expect you to do in English, mathematics and science. We were impressed by your behaviour and very pleased to hear that you enjoy coming to school. Well done for improving your attendance - please keep this up!

We are very impressed by how you are trying to become fit and healthy. Your headteacher and all of the other teachers and helpers do a great job in looking after you. Well done for helping your community by doing such things as performing your music and taking part in the local carnival. In particular, we would like to say well done for showing such respect for others. We thoroughly enjoyed your assemblies and having lunch with you; keep up the healthy eating! Your headteacher and the other adults are keen to try to do the best they can for you. We want to help them and have asked them to do the following things.

- Make even more lessons good.
- Provided more opportunities for you to do writing activities and exciting investigations, problem solving, and experiments in science and mathematics.
- Make sure that all of the adults understand how well the school is doing.

Yours faithfully

Wendy Simmons

Lead Inspector