

Stewart Fleming Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101594
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	331195
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Sheena MacDonald HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	255
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nick Beal
Headteacher	Mr Lee Mason-Ellis
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Witham Road Anerley London SE20 7YB
Telephone number	020 8778 5510
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors. When Stewart Fleming Primary School was inspected in February 2008, it was judged to require special measures.

Description of the school

Stewart Fleming is a large primary school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided for in two Reception classes. About two-thirds of pupils are White British and a third represents several ethnic groups, mainly Black British with Caribbean or African heritage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is rising and, while there are currently only a few pupils at the early stages of learning English, their number is also rising. A higher than average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school provides a breakfast club and there is a privately run after-school club.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

This is now a good school. The key to this transformation has been the excellent and energetic leadership of the headteacher and governing body. They have demonstrated a sharply focused and relentless drive for improvement which has resulted in judgements on all key areas of the school's work improving from inadequate to good in just over a year. The headteacher, with the support of an increasingly effective senior leadership team, has systematically evaluated priorities and implemented strategies for improvement. He and his team have never let the focus stray from improving the personal and academic achievement of pupils. They have improved the physical environment and created an ethos where pupils are well cared for, make good progress, behave well and enjoy coming to school.

Progress over the last year has been outstanding, particularly in reading and mathematics. Comprehensive systems are used well to assess and track pupil progress. These are understood by all and used in a practical way to put in place the type of catch-up group work that is needed and also to improve everyday classroom practice. Everyone in the school is well aware of the high aspirations and there are progress targets in books, on walls and, not quite but very nearly, stamped on foreheads, so that everyone knows what they have achieved and what they are aiming for. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are broadly average and overall progress is good.

Teaching and learning are now good. Lessons are investigative, active and enjoyable. Activities are well matched to differing abilities and interests, and there are increasing links across subjects and to real life. Marking of pupils' work is consistently good and there are some outstanding examples where pupils regularly respond to individual comments or challenges set by the teacher. There is also some exemplary work where teachers check on the learning, set revised challenges and involve pupils in self-evaluation throughout the lessons. Not all lessons are like this and sometimes adults are not quite so clear about what the learning in each lesson will look like. This means that sometimes pupils are not sure exactly what they need to do to achieve success.

School leaders have rightly and successfully focused on making sure that internal systems are in place and are implemented consistently to improve the quality of teaching and learning, improve the behaviour and personal development of pupils and drive up attainment. They have also focused rightly on developing the leadership roles of senior leaders and core subject leaders. The roles, responsibilities and, therefore, impact of other subject leaders are at an embryonic stage. There has been some good work to develop pupils' understanding of and contribution to their diverse local community and the wider world. However, these areas are less well developed.

The school has made good use of local authority support to tackle the major weaknesses in a systematic, rigorous but achievable way. The external support has been gradually reduced as school staff have taken over the lead in tackling weaknesses and striving for improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate, plans for improvement are practical and the school has demonstrated, through its track record, that it has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Reception classes are characterised by caring relationships, lots of practical hands-on activities and fun! It is no surprise, then, that the children settle into school quickly and become happy, confident learners. The children enter the school with skills and knowledge which are generally much lower than expected, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and personal and social skills. They make good progress because there are many interesting opportunities for them to practise their speaking and listening skills and well-targeted group activities to develop their social skills. The learning environment is well organised, inside and outside, with stimulating displays, many of which celebrate the children's early achievements in writing and creative development. The early writing of boys is an area where progress lags behind and there are many boy-friendly writing activities to improve the situation; for example, children wrote instructions for making a boat to rescue the kidnapped class puppet from dastardly pirates. Activities are linked through themes, which reinforces the learning and increases the relevance and enjoyment. The Foundation Stage is well led by the deputy headteacher who, as one of the class teachers, models good practice and provides high-quality support for her colleagues. Thorough assessment of children's progress provides a very clear picture of their levels of development and what they need to do next to improve. Day-to-day planning takes this into account well. The improvements in assessment are relatively new and, although the information is being used well to inform and adapt provision for the current Reception classes, the school has not been in a position before now to use accurate information from this key stage to inform whole-school planning. Improvements are relatively recent and the good systems need to be embedded if the current rapid rates of progress are to be maintained.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the pockets of existing excellent practice in clarifying the learning steps during lessons and involving the pupils' in self- and peer assessment.
- Develop the roles of all subject leaders so that they increasingly contribute to raising attainment.
- Extend the opportunities for pupils to develop a greater understanding of the diversity of their local community and the wider world.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The evidence in pupils' books, in lessons and in the comprehensive and well-used assessment systems shows that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are making rapid progress. The number of pupils who had previously been achieving below age-related expectations has fallen sharply. The progress this year has been outstanding for many pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics, which were the initial focus areas for improvement. Recent work in science is resulting in increasing progress in this subject. This rapid progress was essential for pupils to make up the ground lost when the school was less effective. Writing, and particularly boys' writing, remains an area the school is rightly focusing on as in need of further improvement. The rapid turnaround is due to several factors, mainly improved teaching, learning, behaviour and attitudes, and a relentless leadership focus on achieving challenging attainment targets. The progress of individuals and groups is rigorously tracked, questions are

asked when progress falls short of targets, and strategies are implemented to bring about improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have positive attitudes to school and enjoy their learning. They show respect for adults and other pupils, including those from different minority ethnic groups. Pupils behave well, both inside and around the school, and understand that this plays an important part in helping them to learn. They also understand that it is important to be considerate to others and not to tolerate inappropriate behaviour such as bullying. They say that bullying is now rare and is dealt with swiftly. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and of taking regular exercise. They feel safe in school and use resources sensibly. Pupils with responsibilities, such as those on the school council, take them seriously and make good contributions to the school's community in a variety of different ways, such as bringing about improvements in the healthiness of school meals. Opportunities for them to make a contribution to the local community or the wider world are more limited. Pupils are developing good habits as independent learners by taking an active part in discussions, group work and problem-solving activities. In conjunction with their increasing competence in literacy and numeracy, these make a good contribution to developing their future economic well-being. Attendance is improving and is now broadly in line with the national average for primary schools. There has been a large increase in the number of pupils achieving 100% attendance. However, the attendance of a small minority of pupils is persistently low, which has an adverse effect on the progress they make in their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning have improved markedly since the last inspection. There is no inadequate teaching and some lessons are outstanding. Lessons are lively, with plenty of active, investigative problem-solving work that motivates pupils, especially in mathematics and science. Pupils have lots of opportunities for discussion and sharing their ideas with partners or in groups, which develop their communication and thinking skills and their independence. Lesson planning is good and work is generally well matched to pupils' needs. Teachers use lots of visual materials to generate interest, and this also supports pupils with poor literacy or language skills. Classrooms are stimulating places to be; pupils point to their 'literacy heroes', such as Captain Connectives, on the wall and explain why they must take notice of him. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent, expectations are high and behaviour management is consistent so learning can proceed at a fast pace. Trained teaching assistants give good support to individuals and groups. Teachers' marking is good, and some is outstanding, with chances for pupils to respond to teachers' comments, clear direction on how to improve and instances where pupils mark their own and others' work, learning as they go. Sometimes the delivery of lessons is not as good as the planning because too much information is given in one bite, the pace flags, or resources are not used well. In some lessons teachers are not clear enough about the activities or what successful learning will look like. Pupils have noticed the great improvement in their lessons: as one said, 'I could stand up on stage and I'd say lessons are more fun.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is kept under constant review and quickly adapted to meet the needs of pupils. For example, boys' lower achievement in literacy led to much more use of non-fiction texts in guided reading. This has increased interest and improved attainment. The recently revised curriculum, where links between subjects are much stronger, has brought a new energy and excitement to the learning. Interest and enjoyment are also promoted through an emphasis on the skills of enquiry and problem solving and the use of new technology. This, together with team and paired work, means that pupils are prepared for being lifelong learners. Effective lessons in personal and social education have a positive impact, which is reflected in a dramatic improvement in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to school. Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs and the improving use of visits and visitors. These include business mentors to develop pupils' economic awareness and to raise aspirations. While the curriculum in literacy, numeracy and science is well developed, there is still work to do to improve provision in the other subjects, in cultural understanding and in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) across subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school looks after its pupils well and has good arrangements for safeguarding them. There are good systems to make sure that appropriate support is available to all pupils to enable them to achieve to their best potential, academically and socially. Teaching assistants are well trained to provide individual and small-group support. For example, through the 'Listening Ear', individuals are offered confidential sessions where they can discuss any concerns they may have. The school ensures that pupils achieve well by carefully monitoring their work in the core subjects. This information is used promptly and effectively to identify and provide further support for pupils whose work or personal development show any cause for concern.

The school has implemented a range of effective strategies to improve attendance and punctuality. Consistent behaviour management systems are well used and well understood by the pupils so that behaviour is now good and the previously high number of exclusions has been reduced to nil. Initiatives such as 'Aim Higher' and 'Achieve More' enable pupils to work with business people from the community to develop their understanding of the importance of having high expectations in life and work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership team has transformed the school. This is largely due to excellent leadership from the headteacher who hit the ground running a year ago and has settled into a brisk gallop ever since. Governors have also been influential, providing outstanding strategic and day-to-day support and challenge. The senior leadership team has developed good leadership skills. It models good practice and demonstrates agreed expectations in practice. All senior leaders are facing in the same direction and sending out the same messages. They have achieved a great deal in a short time and all are adamant that there is 'a lot still to do and no going back!'

The vision and dynamism are underpinned by good policies and structures so that all staff, including those new to the school, have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Middle managers are relatively inexperienced and the roles, responsibilities and skills of the leaders of English, mathematics, science and ICT are being developed well so that they are having an increasing impact on raising attainment and improving provision in their subjects. Other subject leaders are not yet involved in this process.

The school's improvement plan has a sharp focus on raising attainment, with clear, measurable targets. All staff are involved in the process of self-evaluation and review. Rigorous monitoring ensures that outcomes are regularly evaluated and actions amended when necessary. The school has rightly focused on building internal capability to make sure that important improvements in assessment, behaviour management, teaching and learning take place as quickly as possible. As a result, its partnerships with external agencies and groups and its work to promote community cohesion are not fully developed. There are good features in both of these areas and the scene is set for further 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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	1
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**

24 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stewart Fleming Primary School, London, SE20 7YB

I visited your school recently with two other inspectors to find out how well you were doing. Thank you for being so friendly, polite and welcoming, especially those of you who gave up your playtime to talk to us. When your school was inspected last February it was not doing as well as it should have done. I have visited you twice since then and each time I was pleased with the good progress you were making. I am delighted to tell you that this time your school is doing so well that it is now a good school. I was particularly pleased to see how polite and well behaved you are and how enthusiastic you are about your learning. Well done, everyone!

You have made really good progress in your work, especially in reading and mathematics. This is important because some of you had fallen behind. You have caught up now and, because you like to take on new challenges, I think you can do even better. Your teachers plan interesting lessons with lots of opportunities for you to talk about your learning, do investigations and solve problems. You told us how much you enjoy learning in this way. There are really good systems for finding out exactly how well you are doing and what needs to be done next. The adults take good care of you and make sure that if you need help you get it. The leaders in your school do a good job and your headteacher and the governors have done especially well to bring about such speedy improvements.

Because I know that Mr Mason-Ellis and the other school leaders want the school to be even better, here are three things I've asked them to do:

- Make sure the teachers share their good ideas so that more lessons are like the excellent ones, especially the ones where everyone is really clear about what good learning looks like and you are involved in assessing your own and each other's work.
- Help the leaders of all subjects to carry out their responsibilities well.
- Give you more opportunities to understand and play a greater part in the local community and the wider world.

I enjoyed my visits to your school and am a little sad that this was the last one. I wish you every success in the future. Keep up the good work!

Yours faithfully

Sheena MacDonald

Her Majesty's Inspector