

Stebon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100922
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	335625
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	473
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frank Jacobs
Headteacher	Alyson Brewer
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 17 lessons taught by 16 teachers. They held meetings with staff, the chair of governors and pupils, and talked to parents. The inspection team observed the school's work, and examined pupils' work, their progress records, school improvement plans and a range of school policies, including those for safeguarding and equal opportunities. The questionnaire responses of 88 parents and carers were analysed together with those completed by staff and pupils in Key Stage 2.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the accuracy of assessments at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1
- whether expectations of pupils, especially boys, across Key Stage 2 are high enough to promote adequate progress
- whether the curriculum promotes pupils' English language skills sufficiently to enable them to meet increasing academic demands as they move up the school
- the extent to which the school's leadership is focused on the right priorities to raise standards and improve pupils' academic achievement.

Information about the school

The great majority of pupils in this larger than average primary school are Bangladeshi with small numbers from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. Most live on the estate surrounding the school. The large majority of pupils have English as an additional language and most begin school with little or no English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school has gained the Investors in People award and Healthy Schools status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Stebon Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Academic standards have risen this year and the attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 is broadly in line with national averages, more strongly so in mathematics than English. Nonetheless, this is a significant improvement in attainment following a declining trend since the last inspection, which led to the lowest results for five years in the tests for Year 6 pupils in 2009. The school's leadership took effective action this academic year to halt, and reverse, the declining trend and implemented, with the support of the local authority, the Improving Schools Programme. This has led not only to much improved attainment this year but has also enabled the school to identify and address weaknesses in the accuracy of assessment across the school. In the past, pupils lower down the school were being graded too generously and lack of precise assessment higher up the school meant that pupils' learning needs were not always effectively addressed. As a result of more accurate assessment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, expectations of pupils in Key Stage 2 are higher. Hence, pupils' learning needs are better met and tracking information as pupils move through the school gives a more accurate picture of their progress. The improved attainment seen in Year 6 is replicated in the year groups below. Given these improvements and the school's generally accurate self-assessment, the capacity for continued improvement is satisfactory. Achievement across the school is satisfactory and good in the Early Years Foundation Stage where children begin with low levels of knowledge and understanding but, by the end of the Reception year, their attainment is close to the national average.

Teaching is satisfactory. Staff supporting lessons are well used to help individuals and groups of pupils and this has a positive impact on their learning and behaviour. However, lessons are often too controlled by teachers leaving limited opportunities for pupils to be actively engaged. This particularly affects the enjoyment and engagement of boys. Work is not always sufficiently challenging for more able pupils. Feedback to pupils on how well they are getting on and pointers for improvement are inconsistent and, on balance, not frequent enough for all to be confident about the progress they are making or how to make their work better.

Many aspects of pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development are good. This is because the curriculum is enriched with a broad range of activities to widen pupils' learning. The school actively engages with local arts groups and projects to broaden pupils' cultural and social development. Links with other schools give pupils valuable first hand insights into traditions and beliefs different to their own. However, the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise their basic writing, numeracy and information and communication technology

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(ICT) skills in different subjects. As a result, opportunities are missed particularly to strengthen pupils' use of more formal written English across a wide enough range of situations. To some extent, this acts as a limiting factor in the attainment of more able pupils who are learning English as an additional language.

Pupils are well looked after, and supported and guided effectively to meet their personal needs. Consequently, pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They are active during the day and their good behaviour and kindness to one another ensure a safe and caring environment. Strong partnerships support pupils' well-being and extend their learning, especially in subjects such as art and music.

Senior staff are now focusing on the right priorities and there is common understanding across the school of what needs to be done to raise attainment further. While senior leaders carry out a wide range of activities to assess the effectiveness of the school's work, middle leaders are not sufficiently involved. Governors provide sound challenge and support to the school and know its strengths and weaknesses well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment, especially for more able pupils and boys, by:
 - ensuring there are regular opportunities for pupils to engage more actively in lessons
 - making sure there is suitable challenge for more able pupils in all lessons
 - providing regular opportunities for cross-curricular work especially to develop the depth and range of pupils' English language.
- Make sure that marking provides clear feedback to pupils on what they have achieved and what they need to do next to improve their work.
- Develop the role of middle leaders so that they are more actively engaged in assessing the quality of work in their areas of responsibility.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Learning in lessons is satisfactory. Typically, pupils engage enthusiastically and purposefully in paired discussions to share ideas though some, especially boys, begin to lose focus when whole class sessions are overlong. The significant majority of pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress in developing their skills to communicate effectively in English. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is particularly rapid. However, pupils' progress in acquiring the more in-depth English language to help them cope with the increasingly academic demands as they move up the school is not always as secure. This holds back, at times, their progress not only in English but also other subjects such as science. This is particularly so for more able pupils who understand more complex ideas but are not always able to explain them. Nonetheless, all groups of pupils make satisfactory progress and sometimes good progress is evident. In Key Stage 1, for example, when expectations are high, many pupils make good progress in their writing, demonstrating effective development of

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ideas and good attention to presentation and grammar. However, this is not typical of all Key Stage 1 classes. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to others in lessons; when targeted for special programmes, their progress is often good. On the whole, girls perform better than boys and this is because boys are not actively enough engaged in many lessons and, hence can lose interest or take in less information. Most pupils enjoy school and have very positive attitudes to learning. They attend regularly. Pupils are courteous and polite, and thoughtful and reflective about issues that go beyond the material world. They get on well with one another and show a healthy curiosity about those who are different. Pupils also have a strong sense of right and wrong. Their contribution to the school community is good, for example, through the school council and in the day-to-day responsibilities they take around the school. However, pupils are not as actively engaged in the local community although the school has strong links and provides very good support for local organisations and residents. Given the satisfactory progress in basic literacy and numeracy and their good social skills, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their next steps in education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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How effective is the provision?

Teachers model English language and writing well for pupils, using good visual cues to support the majority for whom English is an additional language. However, they do not always give pupils enough time to develop their own writing. Many lessons tend to be too closely directed by teachers though good use is made of pair talk to discuss ideas. Increasingly accurate assessment information is well used to identify clear learning objectives and draw up checklists by which teachers and pupils can assess learning. This information is also used well to direct the work of support staff who are well informed about the needs of individual pupils. Support staff move effectively around classrooms asking probing questions and giving helpful guidance. Different work is provided for different groups of pupils, however, that for more able pupils does not always fully meet their needs. Marking corrects pupils' work and some reinforces what pupils have achieved but teachers' comments do not provide enough guidance for improvement. Consequently, pupils are not always clear about how to make their work better.

Planning for English and mathematics is sound and ensures that there is a steady progression of skills. Good emphasis is placed on developing pupils' oral skills across the curriculum but less so on writing. Science work shows increasing attention to investigative tasks, although pupils' writing shows greater confidence in factual knowledge than in using scientific ideas to explain events. While regular ICT lessons help develop basic skills, opportunities for pupils to apply ICT in other subjects are few. A range of programmes effectively supports the needs of lower attainers and ensure any who have fallen behind catch up.

Pupils and their families are well known to staff. Vulnerable pupils are well supported with the help of a wide range of external agencies and professionals. Very good procedures for attendance, which include support from the local mosque, ensure it is in line with national averages and persistent absenteeism is minimised. Induction arrangements, which include home visits, and transition to secondary school are good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides a clear vision for the future development of the school. The senior leadership team, though relatively new and one member short due to illness, has been effective in turning pupils' performance around and raising attainment. Members of

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the team are pulling in the same direction and working systematically with the full involvement of all staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Performance management for support staff is particularly good and this is evident in the quality of their work in lessons. Middle leaders are enthusiastic and provide advice and guidance on their subject areas but have limited opportunities to visit lessons or look at pupils' books in order to provide more informed advice and guidance.

Governors maintain sound oversight of the work of the school though do not visit often enough during the school day. They ensure effective safeguarding arrangements are in place. Child protection procedures are robust and meet requirements. Risk assessments for visits include rigorous contingency plans.

The school monitors the uptake of activities and performance by different groups in the school. Although attainment for all groups has improved it knows there is more to do to raise the achievement of boys and more able pupils. Community cohesion is well promoted and is strong at school, local and United Kingdom level. The school makes a difference to its local community through, for example, the lessons in English for residents and the trips to central London for mums to give them the confidence to take their children. Links with the local madrassas (religious schools), a Catholic school, a school in Essex and developing links with one in Spain contribute well to pupils' understanding of cultural, social, religious and linguistic diversity.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children begin in the Nursery with knowledge and skills that are low for their ages. This

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is particularly so in many aspects of literacy, numeracy and knowledge and understanding of the world. For many, limited space to play in the surrounding estate, means their physical development is also lower than age related expectations. The school provides a good start in the Nursery where adults interact purposefully to promote children's English language and their personal development well. Often the quality of interactions between adults and children are outstanding. Adults model role play well and children participate with enthusiasm and high levels of enjoyment. The good provision continues into the Reception classes though here adults do not always seize on opportunities to interact at just the right moment or to ask a well judged question to move learning on. Nonetheless, children make good progress and achieve well. Though the outdoor areas are not large, they are very well used to give children rich experiences across all areas for learning. Children's work is now accurately assessed and the information from assessments is used well to plan activities that are well matched to their needs. The area is well led and managed with good tracking of progress, and guidance for staff and children on how to improve.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents are happy with their child's overall experience. There is particularly strong agreement about how much children enjoy school, how well the school keeps children safe and how well the school prepares children for future life. A small minority disagree that the school helps them to support their child and feel that the school does not take account of their concerns or views. The inspection evidence indicates, and the school agrees, that it could do more to support parents to help their children and engage them in discussion about issues that concern them. The inspection evidence does not support the views of the small minority who disagree that the school is effectively led or who have concerns about pupils' behaviour. About a fifth of parents who completed the questionnaire have concerns about their child's progress. Inspection evidence indicates that this is improving and that pupils currently make satisfactory progress. Inspection evidence does support some parents' concerns about how well the school meets the particular learning needs of boys and more able pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Stebon Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 473 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	44	43	49	9	9	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	36	41	48	55	2	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	34	49	56	6	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	27	45	51	11	13	7	8
The teaching is good at this school	28	32	45	51	7	8	4	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	25	35	40	21	24	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	39	47	53	5	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	29	33	44	50	3	3	5	6
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	28	39	44	13	15	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	27	40	45	14	16	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	26	30	34	12	14	6	7
The school is led and managed effectively	15	17	46	52	11	13	6	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	32	49	56	9	10	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 July 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Stebon Primary School, Tower Hamlets, London, E17 7AD

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you, being in your lessons and seeing you learning and playing together. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education and helping you to make appropriate progress in your learning.

The school has a number of strengths and these include:

- the good start to education that children get in the Nursery and Reception classes
- you make good choices that are helping you to lead a healthy lifestyle
- adults look after you well and help you to feel safe
- you have good relationships with each other and adults and you behave well
- there are lots of opportunities for you to be involved in interesting projects with professional artists and performers such as the Laban Dance Company.

There are a few things we have asked the school to make better:

- provide you with more opportunities to be actively involved in lessons and to practise writing in other subjects
- make sure that work is not too easy for pupils who can learn fast
- make sure that you all understand how well you have learned in your lessons, and what you need to do next to improve
- give subject leaders time to come round and look in on your lessons and go through your books to see how you and your teachers are doing.

You can help by continuing to be responsible, attending regularly and working hard.

Yours sincerely

Gulshan Kayembe Lead inspector

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