

Mount Stewart Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101501
Local Authority	Brent
Inspection number	335733
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Raminder Arora

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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Daly
Headteacher	Naomi Ninvalle
Date of previous school inspection	6 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons during which ten teachers were observed. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and the Chair of Governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at its monitoring and assessment records, safeguarding documents and those relating to health, safety and strategic planning. In addition, 107 questionnaire returns by parents and carers were considered, together with those returned by staff.

Inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in relation to children's progress
- attainment, learning and progress, in writing and mathematics, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils
- the extent to which teaching meets the needs of all pupils and how well teachers use assessment information to make sure lessons are challenging
- the systems and processes that leaders use to monitor, develop and improve the quality of teaching and learning to raise the attainment and achievement of all pupils.

Information about the school

This is a large infant school, serving a culturally diverse community. Most of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with two thirds of Asian heritage. About a third of all pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Difficulties mostly relate to speech, language and communication. The school has a number of awards to its credit, including Healthy School Status and Investors in People accreditation.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good and inclusive school with a welcoming ethos. Under the purposeful leadership of the headteacher, the school's improvement since its last inspection continues at a pace. Pupils achieve well and enjoy school because they are provided with good teaching and an interesting and enjoyable curriculum, which is enriched with a wide range of clubs and activities. Most parents are supportive of the school, one commenting, 'We have been extremely impressed by the care, support and understanding demonstrated by the staff', and another, 'Nice friendly atmosphere, my child is very happy'.

Children's starting points on entry to the Reception class are variable, but mostly in line with what is expected of four-year-olds. They make good progress and reach above average standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 as a result of good teaching. By the end of Year 2, their attainment is significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. This reflects good achievement from their starting points. Relatively more pupils attain higher levels in reading than in writing and mathematics. Through its systems for tracking progress and analysing data, the school has rightly identified the need for consistent challenge and better use of pupils' learning targets, particularly for the more able pupils in writing and mathematics. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, and those learning English as a new language perform in line with their peers. Sensitive and timely support, in and out of lessons, helps pupils to gain in confidence and independence, and they play a full part in the life of the school.

Pupils make good progress in their all-round development. The good quality of the care, guidance and support ensure that pupils develop the skills and positive attitudes required for the next stage of learning. Most pupils attend regularly and attendance is broadly average. Pupils behave sensibly, work hard and enjoy very positive relationships. They learn effectively because lessons are enjoyable, supportive and productive. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection in embedding an effective system to track pupils' progress. All teachers are responsible for managing the performance data and using them in planning. However, while teachers carefully assess and plan to meet pupils' differing needs, they do not always set work that is consistently challenging, especially for the higher-attaining pupils.

The headteacher, well supported by staff and governors, keeps a close check on the school's performance. The whole staff work together as an effective team, taking note of any variations in performance, however small. The senior leaders have an accurate view of strengths and areas for development. For example, they are aware of the need

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to make improvements in the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and ensure even greater progress through better use of resources, particularly the outdoor area. Leaders are also very aware of the need to strengthen the provision for community cohesion at the global level, which is currently weaker than the other dimensions. The school's track record since the last inspection indicates that its capacity to improve still further is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure a consistent approach to setting and using learning targets in writing and mathematics, so that pupils of all abilities, especially the more able, have work that is appropriately challenging.
- Ensure greater rigour in the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage and plan a more effective use of resources, particularly the outdoors, to widen children's experiences and further their progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are confident, articulate, independent learners, who are knowledgeable about the world in which they live. Pupils like to research and develop good skills in the use of information and communication technology (ICT). There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys in the school. Pupils of all different backgrounds, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those at the early stages of learning English, who benefit from very effective and well targeted support, make particularly rapid progress.

Pupils develop as well-rounded young people who are well prepared for the next stage of their lives by the gains they make in basic and social skills. Pupils regularly consider a range of ethical issues related, for example, to responsibility for the environment and the difference between the lives of people who live in poverty and those who have plenty. Pupils readily consider what it is really like to live in a different place or time and this contributes very effectively to their mature attitudes to each other and their willingness to take on a range of responsibilities serving the school community. The school council provides a good forum for pupil voice and discussions on important issues, such as seeking improvements at playtime and lunchtime. A very good example is the independent management of 'Switch Off Fortnight' project. The school's national award is reflected in pupils' excellent awareness of staying healthy and fit, and keeping safe at all times. Pupils make regular and well-informed contributions to local charities that support their experience of enterprise and community cohesion. Pupils explained in their discussions how proud they are to belong to a school where all cultures are welcomed and valued.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Good relationships between staff and pupils motivate pupils to learn. Clear objectives make pupils aware of the purpose of lessons, which proceed at a brisk pace. The regular teaching of sounds and letters and initiatives, such as 'big writing' are having a positive impact on pupils' writing skills. Most teachers provide suitable opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes and across different subjects. This was noted in a lesson where pupils worked on writing an account of their much-enjoyed recent visit to Kew Gardens. Most lessons present pupils with a good level of challenge, helping them to extend and develop their ideas through skilful questioning. However, this practice is inconsistent and pupils, especially the more able, do not receive sufficient challenge in some lessons.

The curriculum provides a good range of experiences through creative links across different subjects, such as literacy work linked to history and geography through research in the topic 'sea-side'. Through activities such as the annual Arts Week, the school promotes understanding of the cultures represented within the school and beyond. Music is a significant strength of the school. A lesson observed during inspection was evidence of pupils' immense enjoyment and the very good quality of singing. The after-school activities, such as chess, Fit Kids, tennis and drama, are well attended. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved, although the use of ICT skills to enhance learning in different subjects is still developing.

The school, in effective partnership with families and other agencies, successfully promotes a caring and supportive ethos. Transition arrangements are carefully planned

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and appreciated by parents. Particularly effective support from teaching assistants ensures pupils benefit from additional help while working alongside their peers and this greatly enhances their social and emotional development as well as academic achievement. The school is working closely with parents and carers and the junior school to improve attendance levels. These efforts have been successful and attendance is now above average.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, ably supported by the assistant headteacher, has been successful in creating an inclusive, harmonious community where any discrimination is effectively tackled. Senior leaders are passionate about wanting the school to be successful and work effectively as a unified team. All staff are fully involved and have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school development plan is an effective document that has correctly identified the priorities that will help to drive the school forward. Monitoring of teaching and learning is thorough and regularly supported through professional development opportunities gained through Investors in People accreditation and active partnerships with other schools and training institutions. Governors effectively fulfil their statutory duties and have a good balance of expertise between them. They support and challenge the school and hold it to account effectively. There is no evidence of discrimination and equal opportunities are promoted well. As a result, different groups achieve well. However, not all the more able pupils are doing as well as they might in writing and mathematics and measures are in place to deal with this.

The school's engagement with parents and carers is good and marked by the active support provided by the school. Safeguarding arrangements were rigorously applied by all at the time of the inspection and are regularly reviewed. The school is a cohesive community and promotes community cohesion well at the local and national levels, exemplified by its effective links with inter-faith communities. Plans to develop the global dimension are at an early stage of development and the school is not yet evaluating the impact of its work in this field. Links established with many educational organisations and the local authority have proved extremely beneficial to the work of the school. All new initiatives for development are continuously checked for their impact on pupils' achievements.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children come from many different pre-school settings in the area. They enter the Reception class with skills that are broadly at the level expected for children of that age. Children are well supported in their learning and development and make good progress as a result. They exceed the expected levels by the end of Reception in most areas of learning. Particularly good progress is made in language and literacy, due to the effective use of a phonics programme to learn letter and sounds. Activities are suitably planned to meet the needs of children of all abilities and support staff work well with individuals and groups of pupils. It is a secure and safe environment, which is well resourced. Two of the teachers were appointed last month and are being suitably supported to plan and assess effectively. The quality of teaching observed during inspection was satisfactory, due to the new class teachers still getting to know the children. The outdoor facility has benefited considerably from the investment in play equipment, a covered area and a soft tarmac surface. Its use, however, is under-developed. A wide range of activities is offered but the balance of teacher-directed and children's self-initiated activities is not well planned. Children are engaged with and enjoy their learning, either in groups or independently. Assessment of children's progress is carried out well and provides a good overview of their development. All children work and play harmoniously.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is currently in a caretaking position. In the absence of the leader responsible, the monitoring and evaluation of the provision is not robust and is limiting its capacity to develop further. Parents are happy and

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supportive. Children's welfare is a high priority and good arrangements are in place for their safeguarding. There are good procedures to support children entering Reception and then moving into Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are positive in their support for the work of the school. The inspection team agrees with the high value parents place on the care the school provides to ensure children are safe, enjoy school and make enough progress in their learning. A small minority of concerns centred on a lack of communication and inconsistency of progress for the more able children. A few parents feel their suggestions and concerns are not taken into account. The evidence during the inspection shows that the school maintains good communication through its open door policy and welcomes parents' suggestions and concerns. The inspection team agrees that the more able pupils should sometimes do better.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Mount Stewart Infant 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 107 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 270 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	50	54	50	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	44	59	55	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	30	57	53	17	16	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	29	63	59	11	11	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	38	36	59	55	10	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	32	56	52	17	15	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	32	67	63	5	4	2	2
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)	25	23	55	51	12	11	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	24	63	59	15	13	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	21	61	59	16	14	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	15	65	61	21	20	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	30	28	61	57	9	8	5	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	28	69	64	7	7	0	0

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.



21 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Mount Stewart Infant School, Harrow, HA3 0JX

Thank you very much for your very friendly welcome and for helping us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and were really pleased to hear how excited you are about your school and how proud you are of it. Your school is a good school.

These are the best things about your school:

- You behave very well and we know you enjoy being at school very much because you and your parents and carers told us this.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe.
- You are keen to learn and get on well with each other.
- You support the school and local community well.
- You are developing a good understanding of those who live in communities that are different from your own.
- You enjoy the exciting activities your teachers plan for you.
- All the staff and governors are working together with your headteacher to make the school as good as possible.

To help you all perform even better, we have asked the school to make sure that all of you, and especially those more able, are set challenging work. We have asked your teachers to make better use of your learning targets in planning lessons. We have also asked for improvement in the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage, to make sure that the outdoor facility and resources are used well to benefit children.

Finally, we would like to thank you once again for your help and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Raminder Arora

Lead Inspector

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