

Starks Field Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134307
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	341454
Inspection dates	9–10 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Susan Thomas-Pounce

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	390
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Del Goddard
Headteacher	Davindar Bhalla
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's safeguarding documents and policies, the school development plan, minutes of the governing body, School Improvement Partner reports and documents relating to monitoring and evaluation. In addition, inspectors scrutinised pupil's work in books and questionnaires returned from pupils and from staff along with 106 completed questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- the progress and attainment of all pupils and the effectiveness of strategies to improve pupils' writing
- the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and the effectiveness of the use of assessment information to plan lessons which meet the needs of all pupils
- the impact of leadership and management at all levels on improving the school.

Information about the school

Starks Field Primary School, founded in 2004, is a large expanding school in an urban setting. In 2010 the school will educate children aged from 3 to 11, reaching full capacity in 2011. Currently, there are five year groups within the school and provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage, which consists of two classes in Reception and part-time nursery provision for 60 children. Pupils come from a very wide cultural mix; between them they speak over 34 different languages at home. One in three pupils is entitled to free school meals, a percentage well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that in most schools. There is a high proportion at an early stage of speaking English. A very high number of pupils leave or join the school at various stages of the year and in some cases this can be well over half a year group. Extended school provision consists of a breakfast club and an after-school club. These are managed by the governors and are for children attending the school. The school has a number of awards, including the Activemark and the Healthy School Award.

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 good school is exceptionally well regarded by parents. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to this successful school because they and their parents trust the staff. The high quality design of the school and the stimulating resources both inside and outside give the school a 'wow' factor. Several children spoke of their pride in the school, how they couldn't wait to come and how they wished they could attend school at weekends. One mother wrote, 'After five years in the school I would have thought her obsession with school would have worn off.' What parents like most about the school is that everything is done in the interest of the children. Parents are seen as crucial partners in the learning journey and as a result their children feel happy, safe and well cared for.

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. They talk knowledgably about their learning and all the exciting activities provided. Inspectors were impressed with the impact the well-planned, colourful and child-orientated learning environment had on the school community. Pupils have many opportunities throughout the day to learn both in and out of doors. Wonderful displays of children's work can be seen in and around the school and all of this stimulates an interest and excitement to learn. Many parents commented on the style of learning through play and creativity made possible by the exciting layout of the school, and how this has 'captured my child's imagination and given him a real love of learning'.

The developing curriculum is imaginative and promotes pupils' ability to make meaningful links between subjects. Exciting topics such as Fit for Life, and Hubble, Bubble, Toil and Trouble, successfully draw together the use of basic skills and foster the learning values of the school 'creativity, independence, individuality, spirituality and interdependence.

Teaching is good and there is a shared sense of purpose between learners. The best lessons move along with good pace, challenging the pupils' existing knowledge and encouraging independent learning. Where teaching is satisfactory, it is frequently because pupils are over-directed; this reduces progress and individual creativity. The use of assessment to inform planning is satisfactory. Where it is used well, pupils are given work which closely matches their stage of development. They know exactly what they need to do to improve and this results in rapid progress. However, there is inconsistency in the use of assessment information to guide pupils precisely enough in the next steps of their learning.

The school's leadership manages well the increasing number of pupils who join and leave the school throughout the year. New arrivals are warmly welcomed and this helps them to feel a part of the school very quickly. Pupils' behaviour, attendance and

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self-esteem improve from a low base. The well-respected headteacher is ambitious for the school. With governors and staff she is dedicated to enable all pupils to achieve their best both academically and personally. Her leadership has successfully ensured there are clear signs of continuous improvement, for example, in the development of writing, where provision is good.

When the school was founded five years ago, the headteacher had to manage most areas of the school; now the school has nearly grown to full capacity, the time has come to share the leadership more. The school recognises that the role of middle leaders needs further development so they can play a full part in setting the strategic direction of the school and in evaluating and continuing to improve its work. Currently they do not focus sufficiently on how they can make a difference to pupils' achievement. In spite of this, there is a shared understanding of the school's qualities and priorities for improvement, so that it is well placed to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and pupil progress by:
 - making more effective use of the information staff have about pupils' attainment levels to guide them more precisely in their next steps in learning.
- Increase the strategic participation of middle leaders in the development of the school by:
 - enabling them to take a full part in evaluating and continuing to improve the work of the school
 - helping them to focus sharply on the impact of their work on the pupils' learning and achievement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

From well below the expected levels on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils achieve broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they reach the end of Year 2. Data for the current Year 5 indicate that pupils are achieving higher than the national average for their age in English, mathematics and science. In many lessons observed, pupils made good progress and sometimes learning was excellent. On these occasions pupils were highly involved in learning and totally engrossed in the activities. In an outstanding English lesson, for example, Year 3 pupils were bursting to help the teacher make a speech sandwich. They worked excitedly with a partner to share ideas about how they would use punctuation and grammar in their sentences. The classroom was filled with a buzz of purposeful conversation followed by spontaneous applause when an especially good idea was shared.

All pupils have benefited from tailored individual or small group literacy sessions which have successfully helped to plug the gaps in their writing skills. Staff have used a variety of approaches, using the outside environment or practical activities to support better writing. This has a positive effect on their learning in other subjects. Behaviour is good

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and this contributes to the calm, orderly atmosphere. Although improving, attendance remains barely average despite the school's best efforts. There is a range of strategies in place to engage with parents and carers to help pupils to be punctual and attend regularly. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future economic well-being.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy living, as there is a good take-up for the healthy dinners and sporting activities. Pupils develop strong personal skills and learn to work collaboratively. This is especially noticeable in the very high number learning to play a musical instrument or singing together so well. They make a good contribution to the school and wider community through a wide range of activities and readily take responsibility to support the work of the school. They have a strong sense of right and wrong as well as an understanding of other cultures, ensuring that their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	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	2
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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good overall. In some outstanding lessons pupils made significant progress because of careful planning and good use of assessment to promote

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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learning. Learning objectives are explained clearly so pupils know what they have to learn. They respond well to opportunities to use 'talk partners' and work in groups. Good-quality questioning encourages pupils to think and make connections between different aspects of their learning. Teachers give careful attention to developing pupils' language skills in a variety of contexts. Although there are many examples of good practice, there is still room for improvement. For example, not enough use is made of the knowledge staff have of what pupils have already learned so that suitable next steps can be planned.

The school's curriculum is a developing strength. There are many interesting and imaginative activities offered which successfully engage and involve pupils. There is a love of learning in the school because pupils take part in a range of exciting creative activities which significantly enrich the curriculum. They enjoy working practically both in and out of doors. In pupils' books the effectiveness of the drive to improve writing is clearly evident. They write in a range of meaningful contexts, such as writing about experiments, creating rhymes and riddles and for different audiences. The work in books and on display shows good progression in writing skills. The work of the teaching assistants ensures that the care and support of vulnerable pupils is good. The school has a wide range of out-of-school learning opportunities, which play a significant role in enhancing pupils' learning.

There are good levels of support and care and every pupil is valued equally. The school works effectively with a range of agencies to support vulnerable children. This liaison with outside agencies ensures very good support for those with specific needs. Pupils speak warmly of staff helping them feel safe and to overcome any difficulties or concerns. The school does much to improve attendance but this is not yet reflected in good outcomes. The breakfast and after-school club is efficiently organised and pupils are looked after in a safe and well-managed environment. They are provided with healthy food and participate in a good range of activities and games.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is the keystone of the school, providing strong leadership, clear educational direction and ambition to improve. The ethos is one of promoting equality. This is evident in the many aspects of support for different groups of pupils. The school is a very cohesive community and partnerships with communities in contrasting areas of

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the United Kingdom or abroad are beginning to develop. Community cohesion is good. Pupils have a sound understanding of different cultures and faiths. The impact of this is that pupils from different backgrounds get on noticeably well with each other. A large majority of parents say how much they value the work of the school and how well their child is cared for. Child protection procedures and safeguarding guidelines are fully in place. Governors have a good knowledge of the school and are increasingly effective in providing support and challenge. The budget is carefully monitored to get the best value from it. The management and monitoring of teaching are dependent very much on the headteacher, with a limited contribution by some key staff. This is because as a developing school it has been growing from a low staff base. Despite this, the school knows itself well and has a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses. This informs strategies for school improvement that have successfully maintained good outcomes year after year. This shows that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below the levels expected for their age. Within the Early Years Foundation Stage there is a strong emphasis on developing basic skills, with focus sessions that promote learning through play and appropriate intervention by the staff. Projects to promote literacy skills are having a positive impact and children's skills are improving. Progress is good, particularly in personal, social, emotional and physical development. This is because of the good provision, including the well-resourced accommodation and the caring attitude of all staff. Partnerships with

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parents and carers are good and they are appreciative of this support for their children. Enthusiastic leadership and management have created a good sense of teamwork and consistency of approach, as well as good procedures to help children settle into school swiftly. Although staff have a very good understanding of how young children learn, there is an insufficient focus on analysing the rigorously collected assessment data to inform planning. The outside environment is excellent and children respond enthusiastically to the well-planned learning experiences, and rapidly grow in confidence

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

Parents, carers and pupils are overwhelming in their praise for the school. In particular, they praise the quality of leadership and management and the way in which staff cater for their children's individual needs. A very small minority of concerns centred around support for their child's learning. Inspectors judged that the school's systems for communicating and working with parents and carers are usually effective.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Starks Field 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 106 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 390 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	76	72	28	26	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	64	60	38	36	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	55	52	47	44	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	44	56	53	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	48	50	47	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	46	52	49	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	45	53	50	2	2	1	1
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)	35	33	55	52	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	38	58	55	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	48	46	43	0	0	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	40	38	45	41	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	48	45	50	47	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	59	40	38	1	1	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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



11 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Starks Field Primary School, Edmonton, Enfield N9 9SJ

Thank you for making the team of inspectors welcome and for being so friendly and polite when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you. Special thanks to those of you who showed us your work. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

We feel yours is a good school.

Many of you, along with your parents, told us that you are happy and doing well. You told us how much you like the lovely design of your school and all the equipment that you can learn and play on, both inside and outside, throughout the day. You said that you feel welcome and safe and that adults make sure your learning is fun. Some of you race each other to school and others wish they could come at the weekends as well.

Your headteacher and all the staff work very hard to get things right for you. The teaching you receive is good and you make good progress. The school cares well for you and your behaviour is good. You enjoy the after-school clubs, all the exciting musical activities that you have, the many trips you go on and, of course, your learning in lessons.

While these aspects of your school are good, the inspectors think that some things could be better. We have asked the headteacher, other staff and governors to improve the school by:

- making sure that all leaders and staff check that improvements are carried out
- checking carefully that all your teachers always know exactly what you have learned so that they can plan even better lessons.

Thank you again for your help with the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Susan Thomas-Pounce

Lead inspector

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