

St Stephen's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102748
Local Authority	Newham
Inspection number	363665
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Devan Pillai
Headteacher	Jane Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons, observed 15 teachers and held meetings with the headteacher, senior leadership team, teaching staff, members of the governing body and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books. The inspectors checked documents including the school improvement plan, systems for tracking pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation and school policies. They also analysed information from 322 questionnaires from parents and carers, in addition to those received from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What the reasons are for the decline in attainment and progress in English and what leaders and managers are doing to resolve these issues.
- Whether more-able pupils achieve as well as they can and whether teaching caters well enough for their needs.
- Whether teaching is consistently good across different subjects.

Information about the school

This is larger than the average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the number who speak English as an additional language are well above average, with a significant minority at the early stages of language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The needs of these pupils are mostly related to behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.

There is provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in two Reception classes. The school is federated with St Stephen's Nursery School and Children's Centre. It holds a number of awards including Healthy School status and Activemark.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

St Stephen's is an outstanding school where pupils enjoy and achieve well. Parents and carers are rightly pleased with the education their children receive and praise the work of the school highly. For example, parents wrote, 'St Stephens is a fantastic school with very good teaching, they give individual support to every child.' 'I have been repeatedly impressed by the quality of the teaching staff here – their passion and enthusiasm is transferred to the children, they clearly enjoy being part of the St Stephens team.' Many other parents and carers echo these views. The headteacher and her team have been highly successful in ensuring commitment to school improvement. The vision for the school is clear and staff appreciate the way leaders practise what they preach and lead by example.

Since the last inspection, attainment had dipped in English to below that nationally. As a result of the school's robust action, leaders have driven up attainment in English through a rigorous, determined approach to improving writing, which has paid dividends. Boys' writing in Years 1 and 2 has particularly improved; an area for improvement from the last inspection. Attainment is currently average, as demonstrated by the school's own tracking data for 2011 and evidence gathered by inspectors from lesson observations and pupils' exercise books. This represents good, and sometimes outstanding, progress from pupils' initially low starting points. Almost always good, and sometimes excellent, teaching contributes to the progress pupils make, although sometimes the most able are not challenged as well as they could be in every lesson. Leaders have correctly identified that attainment can be raised further through improving the remaining satisfactory teaching to good and the good to outstanding. Exemplary leadership and management of teaching and learning have ensured training for teachers focuses tightly on specific areas identified through lesson observations. These areas are revisited regularly to gauge improvement and tweak support. High quality 'educational assistant' support provided in classrooms has been instrumental in supporting the teaching of mathematics for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils now make better progress as a result. Self-evaluation is thorough and accurate which enables a clear focus on those areas which require attention. This is strong evidence of the school's continuing excellent capacity to make further improvements.

An outstanding curriculum, coupled with excellent standards of care, guidance and support, ensures a high-quality learning environment which encourages pupils to take risks and excel. Pupils are safe and secure. The welfare and safety of pupils are very firmly at the heart of all policies relating to the safeguarding of pupils. The policies are thorough, purposeful and offer excellent information and guidance to all staff. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education. Alongside their average levels of basic skills and high attendance rates, pupils are mature and work

well together in teams. The acquisition of Healthy School status and the Activemark demonstrates the school's commitment to developing pupils' healthy lifestyles.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the improvements in attainment already evident in English and mathematics by:
 - moving the small amount of satisfactory teaching to good and increasing the proportion of consistently outstanding teaching to 50%
 - developing the practice in place to raise the challenge for the most able, so that at least 35% of Year 6 pupils attain Level 5 in English and mathematics by the end of the next academic year.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning ensure that pupils make at least good, and sometimes excellent, progress from their below average starting points. Pupils are motivated and engaged by the activities presented to them and they always make the most of their learning time. They work exceptionally well together in groups and pairs and are keen to help each other to learn. In an outstanding Year 6 science lesson for example, pupils worked together to investigate fair testing. They delegated tasks within their group and one was heard saying to another, 'Shall I help you?' Both pupils then went on to discuss their findings maturely and made excellent progress. In another good English lesson in Year 2, a wide range of activities ensured pupils improved their writing by identifying adverbs correctly and using them well in their sentences. Pupils often reflected on their work and improved it following discussions with their teacher. Pupils' books also show that advice by way of written comments is put into practice. This has had a good impact on pupils' progress. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with opportunities to shine and one explained excitedly to an inspector about the words used to describe their monster. Those with challenging behaviour are managed very well and also make good progress in their learning. The unrelenting focus on speaking and listening ensures that those pupils who speak English as an additional language make consistently good progress.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles and link this clearly with safety. For instance, they understand the importance of warming up before physical activity. They speak knowledgeably about possible hazards they may encounter and are proactive in their approach to using the internet. Pupils are proud of the wide range of responsibilities they assume both in school and the wider community. They have thoroughly enjoyed their visits to the local hospital's 'Nostalgia Room', where they have engaged elderly people in discussion about the past. This has enhanced their knowledge of local history and past events. Pupils' knowledge of right and wrong is exemplary and the empathy pupils show for others less fortunate is highly commendable. This contributes well to the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural outcomes for pupils.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Overall, teaching is good and it is clear that teachers are extremely eager to improve their practice. Because teaching is almost always good, learning and progress are good and sometimes better. Some outstanding lessons were seen across both key stages during the inspection where pupils made exceptional gains in their learning. In an excellent Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were given every opportunity to develop a deep understanding of the subject through open ended tasks. The teacher's expectations of what pupils could do were high. Pupils got to grips quickly with working out the number of different combinations there were when calculating quantities of cakes according to the number of eggs. This was because the teacher had clearly modelled how to organise and plan investigative mathematics. A good feature of many lessons is the way teachers question pupils. Their 'no hands up' approach ensures that all pupils prepare answers and participate fully. Targeted questions according to ability ensure all pupils move on in their learning. However, tasks do not always promote the learning of the most able effectively enough, and in a few lessons they spend too long marking time. In the majority of lessons however, time is used effectively, ensuring that pupils remain focused and engaged with their learning. Occasionally pupils lose interest because teachers spend too long talking rather than allowing them to work independently. Teachers employ a variety of techniques to ensure those pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress.

The innovative curriculum facilitates skill development through a combination of subjects. As a result, pupils are able to make useful links which makes learning interesting and more meaningful. For instance, pupils developed their literacy skills by analysing the diary of a First World War soldier to consider the emotions expressed in the text. The topic-based approach provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication

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

technology (ICT) skills. In addition, this promotes excellent enjoyment and pupils develop memorable experiences. Enrichment of the curriculum is first class with a wide range of visits, visitors and additional activities including days that follow a particular theme, all adding interest and enjoyment to learning.

Excellent care, guidance and support for pupils are based on a commitment to meeting the individual needs of every pupil and their family. Potentially vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported extremely well by an excellent range of strategies and highly trained, supportive and encouraging adults. This ensures that the wide variety of needs within the school are addressed exceptionally well. Parents and carers are always involved, consulted and given help if necessary. Outside agencies offer extremely well-targeted support, for instance through the wide variety of language intervention available and speech therapy.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership has been distributed well and, as a result, leadership at all levels is highly effective. Subject leaders check that the quality of teaching is up to scratch in their areas of responsibility and give support to teachers in implementing new initiatives and ways of teaching. Bespoke training for individual teachers ensures success in driving through improvements in the quality of teaching and the pursuit of excellence. The parental and carers' questionnaires showed an extremely high degree of satisfaction with the way in which the school is led and managed. Levels of parental and carers' engagement are excellent because the school listens well to their views and suggestions. Excellent communication with parents and carers helps them play their full part in supporting their child's learning at home.

The governing body shares the headteacher's vision. Governors are proactive, involve themselves well in all the school does and promote community cohesion exceptionally well. Most understand how and why the school is performing as it is and contribute effectively to the school's self-evaluation. Some are not always aware of what the performance data show. The school's excellent array of partnership links has a great impact on the opportunities provided to enhance learning. Partnerships with a variety of sporting and musical organisations have contributed exceptionally well to developing pupils' particular gifts and talents. Highly successful links with other schools in the United Kingdom and abroad have ensured that pupils' understanding about life in regions other than their own is comprehensive. There is a high level of equality of opportunity. The school is acutely aware of the progress of different groups of pupils and, as a result, is working further on developing

consistent challenge for more-able pupils. There is no evidence of any discrimination. The school's excellent procedures for safeguarding are known well by all staff and pupils. Checks on adults who work in the school are carried out regularly and rigorously.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The large majority of children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and those who are potentially vulnerable make at least good progress. Children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge well below that expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal and social skills. Improvements made to the provision mean that levels at the end of the Reception year are rising and many now reach the learning goals expected for most children as they enter Year 1. Children have a very well developed awareness of the rules and boundaries that keep them safe. They wash their hands before eating snacks and after using the toilet without prompting. Behaviour in the Reception classes is excellent and any minor squabbles are dealt with very effectively and promptly by staff. Children respond well to role play opportunities and cooperate well with each other. For instance, they went on an animal hunt to find, name and write the names of the animals found. This was enjoyed immensely. They are confident when using new technology, for example when using the electronic whiteboard to sort shapes. They have excellent relationships with adults and with each other.

Teachers make excellent use of assessment information to plan focused activities which are adult led and those which children can choose for themselves. Themes are planned around the six areas of learning which promotes good, and sometimes outstanding, learning. Extension activities ensure that the more-able children are challenged well. The teaching of letters and sounds, elementary writing and number is excellent and, as a result, children are fully prepared for Year 1. Each child is

recognised as unique and provision is carefully planned to ensure each child has the opportunity to achieve as well as they can and no one is disadvantaged. The highly effective leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage contributes to the excellent start made by the youngest children. There is a strong partnership with parents and carers, and close liaison with the federated nursery school ensures that children settle quickly into the Reception classes. The Year 1 teachers work closely with the Early Years Foundation Stage staff to ensure a smooth transition for children. As a result, teachers can build upon the already good achievement more effectively.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Approximately three quarters of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Of these, an overwhelming majority expressed very positive views about the school. All say their children enjoy school and that they are happy with their child's experience at the school. Almost all parents and carers were in agreement with the remaining statements on the questionnaire.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Stephen's 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 322 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 405 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	234	73	88	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	239	74	81	25	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	214	66	104	32	2	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	185	57	129	40	3	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	226	70	92	29	4	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	187	58	131	41	4	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	200	62	119	37	1	0	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)	167	52	143	44	4	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	156	48	159	49	1	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	165	51	145	45	5	2	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	145	45	162	50	7	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	199	62	115	36	3	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	223	69	97	30	1	0	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 all 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Stephen's Primary School, London E6 1AS

What a pleasure it was to visit your school recently. We enjoyed ourselves very much! We think your school is outstanding; this means it does lots of things extremely well. Your teachers do a good job and some of them are quite brilliant! We enjoyed watching lots of good, and some excellent, lessons. You produced some lovely writing and you worked together well on your scientific experiments and when investigating mathematical problems about eggs and cakes.

Some of you spoke to us about your school and others completed a questionnaire. This was very helpful and ensured we had your views about St Stephen's. We were very interested in what you wrote and had to say to us. You really behave very well indeed and we were extremely impressed by your polite, courteous manner. The school cares for you very well and makes sure that you are kept safe. We were glad to hear that you know what it means to lead a healthy life and that you know how to keep yourselves safe and sound. We like the way you take on extra jobs in school and the way you involve yourselves in the area around your school in particular. It was good to hear about the 'Nostalgia Room' in the local hospital and your visits there. This is highly commendable, well done!

Even in a school like yours there is work to be done. Sometimes some of you find parts of your lessons a little bit too easy and we would like more of you to get a Level 5 in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. We think the school could do this if even more lessons were outstanding. We have asked the school to:

- help you get even higher results in English and mathematics by ensuring that more teaching is outstanding and that all of you have work which makes you think hard all the way through your lessons.

You can help with this by always working hard and doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Glynis Bradley-Peat
Lead inspector

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