

Stalyhill Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106222
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	377380
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Lead inspector	Tim Vaughan HMI

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	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lee Nuttall
Headteacher	Sue Nuttall
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan
David Halford

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons, registration times, two assemblies and observed the work of seven teachers and teaching assistants. They talked with a wide range of pupils throughout the inspection and heard a range of individuals read. Meetings were held with members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school improvement plan, the safeguarding policy and the school's own self-evaluation. The inspectors analysed 82 parental and carers' questionnaires and others completed by staff. Inspectors consulted the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. At the time, there were no responses available on Parent View.

Information about the school

Stalyhill Infant School is smaller than the average-sized infant school. A small number of pupils are from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average. There is very little pupil mobility. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has achieved the Tameside Healthy Choice Award, the Activemark and Healthy School status.

Early years provision is provided through Hilltop Private Day Nursery EY287274. Wise Owl Out-of-School Club URN 312382 is also located on the school site. Both of these settings are inspected separately and were not part of this inspection.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Pupils are happy and confident and have highly positive attitudes to their learning. This is because of the high quality of care and support for individuals and the commitment of the headteacher and staff to every child. 'My child is happy, progressing well and loves going to school' was a typical parental/carer comment. The school is currently not outstanding because there is not yet enough excellent teaching to ensure that pupils make outstanding progress.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2, they reach standards above national expectations. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress because of the effective individual support they receive.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. However, there are some missed opportunities to ensure that pupils make maximum progress in lessons. The teaching of the sounds that letters make has some inconsistencies. There are an insufficient number of books for pupils that celebrate a range of languages and disabilities or that show different gender or minority ethnic people in non-stereotypical roles.
- The school has a strong family feel and its ethos promotes pupils contributing to the school community, caring and supporting one another. As a result, pupils show a high level of emotional well being. There are high levels of attendance and punctuality. Behaviour is excellent and all groups of pupils feel very safe.
- The management of all staff is very effective and supported by good professional development. Clear vision and priorities are set by the headteacher and the governing body gives excellent support and challenge. Together they are clear where the school must improve further. For example, they are aware that middle leaders need further training in judging the quality of teaching.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and learning by:
 - systematically and effectively checking pupils' understanding in every lesson
 - improving the pace of teaching in some lessons
 - providing further training for middle leaders in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning
 - providing further training for all staff so that they consistently and correctly enunciate the sounds that letters make.
- Improve equality and diversity by:
 - ensuring that books for pupils celebrate a range of languages and disabilities
 - ensuring that books show different gender and minority ethnic people in non-stereotypical roles.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils develop great enthusiasm for learning and are keen and motivated to succeed. They are attentive in class and engage enthusiastically with a wide range of experiences. They particularly enjoy activities that are active and inspire them to discuss and share their ideas with each other. For example, in a Year 1 literacy lesson, pupils excitedly talked about what creature might be missing from a broken egg found in the school grounds.

Most children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are expected for four year olds. Children's skills are strongest in their personal and social development, and the curriculum effectively builds upon this through a careful focus upon talk and play as the key ways to learn. Parents and carers consistently commented that staff are very effective at helping children to settle and treating each child as an individual.

By the end of their time in the Reception class, children make expected progress from their starting points and the difference between groups is narrow. This is evident across the areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage except in linking sounds and letters where progress by a range of children is less secure.

Across Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and inspectors observed this in lessons during the inspection. For the last five years, attainment by the time that pupils move to junior school, including in reading, has been above average. This includes different groups, such as minority ethnic pupils, disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs. In particular, boys' achievement has improved so much that it is above that of girls, particularly in mathematics in 2011. The school has correctly identified this as a priority for improvement and clear plans are in place to ensure that the school meets girls' learning needs. Parents and carers have an accurate view of pupils' learning and they typically comment that their children are making good progress.

Pupils across the school enjoy reading. They benefit from well resourced collections of books and well planned opportunities to read books in lessons and to read aloud in assembly. Pupils spoken to during the inspection consistently understood the difference between

fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils have regular opportunities to read their reading books at home and school. Those pupils who find reading more difficult enjoy books and are confident to have a try but struggle with some of the sounds that letters make.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is mainly good, some is outstanding, and this is widely acknowledged by parents and carers. In the best lessons, teachers demonstrate that they have good subject knowledge and make very effective use of resources to encourage pupils' active participation. This was evident, for example, in an imaginative Year 1 Religious Education lesson about Easter. The teacher was well prepared and introduced decorative, Ukrainian Easter eggs called pysanka and used short, vibrant and highly engaging explanations about culture and symbolism. As a result, pupils learnt exceptionally well. Across lessons, pupils are involved in agreeing their own learning targets and staff use clear marking and academic guidance to support individuals.

Teaching assistants lead small group activities and provide very effective one to one support for a range of individuals and groups in lessons. In the most striking example, a teaching assistant in one of the Reception classes provided a small group of children with outstanding teaching through highly engaging communication, excellent use of language and open-ended questions and careful adaptation of the activity to meet individual needs.

In order for more teaching to become outstanding, some teachers need to set a greater pace and progress in their lessons and make more structured use of questions to ensure that pupils' understanding is clear. Greater accuracy in how staff enunciate the sounds that letters make will further enhance the teaching of reading which in other respects is strong across the school.

The school provides a well organised and highly effective curriculum. Building pupils' emotional well being is at the heart of the school's approach and there is a strong emphasis upon pupils becoming confident, capable communicators and accessing a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. For example, one child speaking to an inspector at lunchtime was very responsive but also very keen to get to her pottery class. Very effective use is made of the learning environment across the school to promote learning, including many well developed spaces for role-play and displays, for example, about religious festivals.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have deep respect for their school and all staff. They say that they feel safe, valued and respected. Through the many opportunities to contribute to the school community, pupils act in mature, highly responsible ways and show high levels of consideration for others. For example, one boy challenged older children, not from the school, using outdoor equipment that he knew was unsafe. Throughout lessons, pupils work independently and collaboratively in groups with autonomy and considerable sensitivity to one another. The school's curriculum also ensures that pupils understand risk, for example, through focusing upon substance misuse and anti-bullying activities. Children, as young as those in the Reception class, know that they should only be unaccompanied with visitors wearing with a certain colour badge.

During the inspection, pupils were extremely confident, courteous and willing to talk to inspectors about their enjoyment of school and their interests. This reflected the above

average levels of school attendance, high levels of punctuality to school and lessons and the extreme rarity of instances of bullying. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoyed opportunities to look after one another, for example, the weekly role of seeking out others who may wish to have someone to play with or the role of checking the safety board for messages for the whole school and sharing this through assembly.

Through careful attention to daily routines, classroom layout, transition times in the school day and the outdoor area, the school is a very safe environment. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they show high levels of self-discipline. Scrutiny of behavioural records show this is the case over time too. Pupils who find difficulty in keeping to boundaries are supported very effectively. As a result, they make excellent improvements in their behaviour. Parents and carers acknowledge this and a typical comment was, 'the school highly values behaviour and manners'.

Leadership and management

The headteacher leads with clear vision and maximises the distinctive character of the school, as the only infant school in Tameside, to good effect. She knows the whole school community well and ensures that staff nurture the confidence and well being of all pupils and enable them to enjoy learning and feel very confident and secure. Her ambition, clear educational direction and focused management of performance have improved achievement and the quality of pupils' learning over a sustained period. Consequently, the school is oversubscribed and parents, carers and staff consistently acknowledge her very effective leadership. The school has continued to improve since the previous inspection. For example, governance is now excellent because the governing body has high levels of insight about the school and is confident in providing high levels of professional challenge to hold the school to account. The headteacher is not complacent and is clear about the areas for further improvement so that the school can achieve her vision of being outstanding.

Across the whole school team there is a shared understanding of priorities and a strong commitment to learning together. Clearly focused professional development, particularly including teaching assistants, has enhanced the good teaching by all staff. Staff describe the school like being an extension of their own family, such is their belief in its values and cohesiveness.

The curriculum provides a broad range of experiences. This means that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Middle leaders give good leadership to their areas of responsibility. For example, in monitoring practice and supporting colleagues in the Early Years Foundation Stage. All middle leaders need further training in judging the quality of teaching so that more teaching can become outstanding.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and staff are vigilant in identifying and responding to any potential risks that pupils may encounter. Child protection procedures are exemplary. There are good opportunities to explore and develop pupils' understanding of equality and diversity. For example, through celebrating different festivals, learning different languages and making links with schools in Holland and Scotland. However, the books available for pupils cover an insufficient amount of diversity in order to further challenge pupils' stereotypes.

During the past year, the whole school community has noticed the absence of the deputy headteacher due to long term sickness. Through the very effective leadership of the

headteacher and the governing body, the school has pulled together and several staff have taken on new roles. As a result, the school has continued to thrive and sustained its ability to accurately self-evaluate, plan ahead and improve. Together with other strengths, including consistently good or better teaching, the school's capacity for continued improvement is good.

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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



23 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stalyhill Infant School, Stalybridge, SK15 2TR

Thank you for your help when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed chatting with you in lessons, around school and in the meetings we held. You expressed your views very clearly and they were very helpful to us. We also liked listening to some of you read.

We are pleased to tell you that Stalyhill is a good infant school. We were very impressed by the places to play and learn in each of the classrooms. In all of your lessons you are taught well, make good progress in your work and are very well looked after.

Some of what your school does is excellent, for example, the way in which you are cared for and feel very safe. We were impressed by the care and support that you are each given to feel happy and confident and to achieve as much as you can. We were also pleased to find that your attendance at school is high.

Your behaviour around school is outstanding. You told us that you like school and feel listened to. We were pleased to see the progress that the school helps you to achieve in reading, writing and mathematics. Some of your lessons are excellent, such as the religious education lesson in Year 2 about pysanka Easter eggs. We were pleased that children in the Reception classes are helped to learn to play together and to investigate both indoors and outdoors.

Your teachers work hard to make the school as good as it can be. To help them we have asked them to make sure that more of your lessons are like the very best ones that we saw. You can help by telling your teachers when you do not understand or when you have completed the work set. To help you in learning to read we have asked your teachers to learn the correct way to say the sounds that letters make. We have also asked staff to make sure that books in the library tell you more about the differences between groups of people. Keep working hard.

Yours sincerely

Tim Vaughan
Her Majesty's Inspector

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