



Stanburn First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102214
Local Authority Harrow
Inspection number 286311
Inspection date 13 September 2006
Reporting inspector Jane Wotherspoon HMI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Abercorn Road
School category	Community		Stanmore
Age range of pupils	4-8		HA7 2PJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02089541423
Number on roll (school)	354	Fax number	02089549912
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Terry Gibson
		Headteacher	Mrs A Drakeford
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. It serves an area of relative advantage although many pupils travel to the school from outside the immediate area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. An average proportion of pupils has been identified as having learning difficulties. A wide range of ethnic groups is represented. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language and around a fifth are at the early stages of learning English. At the time of the inspection, Reception pupils had not yet joined the school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Stanburn First is a good school that is well on its way to becoming outstanding. A core of long-serving staff in key roles provides stability and a strong sense of shared purpose. The strong leadership of the headteacher and senior staff gives the school significant potential to build further on its successes. This team is modest about what the school does well. It is not complacent and constantly strives to improve provision for the children. This is a school where staff are keen to hold on to what works well while embracing new initiatives.

Provision in the Reception classes is good. Teachers' records show that children achieve well both academically and socially. Children who are just starting Year 1 do so with a high level of confidence and independence gained during their time in Reception.

In the last academic year, the big push on developing pupils' writing skills has reaped rewards. Some pupils have made very good progress and the standards of writing are now high. Many write at levels way beyond expectations for their age. Standards of reading have remained consistently above average for many years and results continue to rise. The school puts this down to the regular opportunities to practise reading, including daily practice at home. By contrast, pupils' achievement and the standards they reach in mathematics are good. Despite a rise in the results of 2006, those pupils who are reaching high levels in reading and writing are not making as much progress in mathematics. The challenge for the school now is to raise standards in mathematics to a similar level, while sustaining the improvements in reading and writing. Senior staff have already identified that the improvements to marking, feedback and target setting that made the difference to writing can be used to help improve standards in mathematics.

Parents who wrote comments such as... 'I think that the teaching staff are very good at their jobs and that every child matters'.....and....'The ethos of the school is excellent'...reflect the positive views of the vast majority of parents completing the inspection questionnaire. Such views are justified. The high level of care for pupils is underpinned by warm relationships that help the children to feel safe and to be confident that there is someone to turn to if they have a problem. Individuals are valued and the school celebrates the cultural diversity of its pupils. In such an atmosphere, pupils' personal development is fostered strongly. As a result, children get on well with each other and develop a growing sense of responsibility. They thoroughly enjoy the many opportunities to work together in lessons in pairs and groups and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

An outstanding feature of the school's process for self evaluation is the detailed analysis of performance data by the assessment manager. Analysis of how well different groups of pupils are doing sets the agenda for improvement. Well established systems for tracking the progress pupils make from year to year help staff to identify those individuals and groups of pupils who may need extra support or additional challenge. Individuals who need it are given a programme of one-to-one support and catch-up programmes, for example, in reading. Subsequent analysis enables the school to check

that such provision had been successful. In most cases it has, and the school can show that some of these pupils have made exceptional progress.

An example of the school's determination to improve provision can be seen in the plans to develop the 'creative curriculum'. The school has three major initiatives in the pipeline to enrich the activities on offer to the children and to provide what the headteacher refers to as 'the wow factor in their learning'.

Plans to develop further the environmental area, gain the Healthy Schools Award and the development of the blast shelter from World War II into a museum for the wider community are at various stages of development. The latter is the result of a successful bid for lottery funding. These plans are not just about the content of the curriculum but also about presenting activities in a creative way to capitalise on the pupils' enthusiasm for learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further in mathematics, especially to ensure that pupils capable of reaching higher standards are challenged to do so.
- Take forward plans to develop the creative curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills and knowledge that is broadly expected for their age though there are wide variations. Many are at an early stage of learning English and receive support to help them make good progress. Children do well in Reception and begin Year 1 having achieved most of the early learning goals. They continue to make good progress, and by the time they leave at the end of Year 3 have attained high standards in reading and writing and good standards in mathematics. Support for pupils with learning difficulties helps them to make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Attendance is good. Children are very keen, enjoy school and are clearly excited by interesting activities such as finding insects in the environmental area. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning during the inspection were very good. Exemplary behaviour in assembly helped to create a calm, reflective start to the day enlivened by enthusiastic singing. A small number of parents raised concerns about bullying. Pupils themselves are convinced that such incidents are rare and always sorted out with the help of adults. They know the 'red box' system to alert staff to any problems. Pupils say that sometimes they fall out with each other but soon make friends again. Older pupils willingly take on additional responsibilities for little jobs and by being buddies in the playground. They can't wait for the Reception children to start school so that they can help to look after them. Posters by Year 1 pupils show there is developing awareness of how to keep safe and how to lead a healthy lifestyle. The children have

plenty to say about school life during lunchtime 'picnics' with the headteacher but there is scope for them to make a stronger contribution to decision-making in the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Consistently good teaching contributes much to the progress pupils make over time. In reading and writing this leads to high standards but there is more to do to challenge more able pupils in mathematics. Classes are well managed and organised with a strong emphasis on group work. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively. They are clear about what the children should achieve from the activities they support and so make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

Well established systems for assessing what pupils know and can do underpin teachers' knowledge of the children's needs. The marking and feedback to pupils on their writing is a particular strength. Pupils say they like it when teachers highlight the good words they have used and the comments tell them what to do better next time. This gives them a strong sense of their own learning and achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is planned effectively. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good though there is scope to develop the outdoor provision further. The flexible way in which the day is organised in Year 1 helps to ease the transition from Reception. Staff use national guidance flexibly to meet the interests of their pupils. An outstanding feature of the provision is the way that pupils are supported in different groups to help them achieve more. Very effective teaching of catch-up programmes by teaching assistants makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress in reading. However, there is more to do to use the wider curriculum to promote higher standards in mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are cared for very well. Staff are alert to both their academic and social needs. The school has strong systems in place to identify and respond to pupils' learning needs at an early stage. There is a clear distinction between the needs of, and support for, pupils with learning difficulties and those who are at an early stage of learning English. The school has good links with local authority services to support pupils with specific needs. Induction for children starting school in Reception is carefully planned and managed with a programme of home-visits and a staggered start.

Systems for ensuring pupils' welfare and child protection procedures are secure. The school carries out appropriate checks on adults who work in the school, including parent volunteers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The head, deputy and senior staff make an outstanding contribution to the ethos of the school. They have high expectations of themselves, of the staff teams they lead, and of the children. Strong teamwork enables senior staff to successfully support and induct staff new to the school. Systems are well embedded for monitoring the school's work, for identifying what is working well and what needs improvement. Governors support the school effectively through their visits. They know the school's strengths and recognise what needs improving.

Data analysis is exemplary. It is used very effectively to highlight where improvement is needed, and to evaluate the impact of any action taken. In this way, improvements have been, and continue to be, made to the provision. Standards are still rising as a result.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

It was good to meet you when I came to visit the school. A special 'thank-you' to all those who came to tell me what you think about the school.

It was good to see all the things that you do. I could see that you enjoy school, especially working in the environmental area, and you are really good at working together in groups. Your behaviour is very good, although you told me that sometimes you 'fall out' with each other. Your teachers and the other adults in school look after you very well.

You told me that you think you are doing well at school and I agree. Your writing has improved a lot over the last year. You said you like it when teachers underline the good bits in your work. Those of you who need extra help with reading are making really good progress.

Your teachers plan to give you even more exciting things to do in the future. I have asked them to help you do even better in mathematics.

I hope you continue to work hard and to enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jane Wotherspoon HMI