

St Stephen's Church of England Primary School

Albyn Road, Deptford, London, SE8 4ED

Inspection dates

17–18 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils consistently leave school with outstanding reading skills and above average attainment in writing and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good overall with some that is outstanding. Teachers' effective planning and enthusiasm inspire pupils to learn well.
- School leaders and the governing body ensure that teachers and teaching assistants take full responsibility for their pupils' progress. Leaders provide high levels of support and training to improve colleagues' teaching skills. Teachers check up on pupils' progress regularly and make good use of this information to arrange additional help for any pupils who are underperforming.
- The school has successfully improved the achievement of those groups of pupils who had been doing less well. As a result, school leaders were invited to support a local school and share its good practice as part of a government project.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Pupils are always polite and welcoming to all.
- The school offers pupils a wide range of opportunities and experiences. These make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual moral social and cultural development. Pupils are thus well prepared for the next stage of their education and to participate fully and constructively in society.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' written feedback in marking does not always tell pupils precisely how well they are doing and teachers do not set written follow-up activities to help pupils improve the quality of their work. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar are not always corrected.
- The rate of progress in mathematics is not always as rapid as it should be, especially in Years 1 to 4, as pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to real-life situations.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by ten teachers. In addition, inspectors observed the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent) as well as the work of small support groups. Many of these observations were made jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher of the school.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other members, a representative of the local authority, parents and carers, staff, including senior and middle leaders, and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including teachers' planning, the school's self-evaluation and development plans, assessment information, monitoring files, governing body minutes, safeguarding documentation and samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their enjoyment of books.
- Inspectors considered the 41 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the 24 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. Pupils are always polite and welcoming to all.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Monica Raphael	Additional Inspector
Jill Thewlis	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils for whom English is an additional language and those known to be eligible for free school meals are above those found nationally.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are well above average, with the largest groups being of Black Caribbean and Black African heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. Most of this group have speech, language and communication needs. The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportions of pupils making consistently outstanding progress in writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that teachers' marking gives pupils clear feedback on how well they are doing and that pupils are given individual written follow-up activities to improve their work
 - ensuring that teachers frequently correct pupils' errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar in pupils' written work in subjects other than English.
- Plan for opportunities across different subjects for pupils to practise their mathematical skills and apply them to real-life situations.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are similar to national age-related expectations. Owing to a rich learning environment and skilful teaching, they make good progress in all areas of learning and personal development.
- Rates of progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 are consistently good, and sometimes outstanding. As a result, standards attained over time at the end of Year 6 are consistently high in reading and above average overall in writing and mathematics. Attainment at the higher Level 5, however, dipped to below average in 2011 in writing and mathematics. The school successfully addressed this decline and provisional 2012 results show that results are once again above average.
- Progress in mathematics in Years 1 to 4 is not as rapid as it is in Years 5 and 6. This is because there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematics learning to practical situations and for investigative work. In other subjects, there are no explicitly planned activities where pupils can practise and extend their mathematical skills.
- Progress in writing is consistently good or better across the school because pupils have many opportunities to write across a wide range of interesting topics. Inspectors saw pupils using their recent experience of visiting the Tower of London to write about castles and expand their use of adjectives in describing features of a range of fortresses. Pupils work together very effectively to share ideas, draft their work on mini whiteboards and independently consult dictionaries and thesauruses.
- Progress in reading is outstanding owing to highly skilled teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) and plentiful additional support for pupils experiencing difficulties. In addition, pupils read quietly for half an hour a day in school, with many choosing to read during break times. Reading at home is actively encouraged. Pupils say that they value the variety of books that they are encouraged to read and enjoy writing and sharing their weekly book reviews.
- The progress of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and those known to be eligible for free school meals make similar progress to their peers.

The quality of teaching is good

- Inspectors agree with the view of the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the online survey that the quality of teaching is good.
- Almost all teachers openly display their own passion and enthusiasm for learning which are infectious and act as a strong role model for pupils. Pupils therefore enjoy learning and work very well together in pairs and groups.
- Teachers encourage pupils to persevere with challenging tasks to develop their skills and learn resilience. For example, in a Key Stage 2 dance lesson, pupils acted out the movements of a giraffe to music. Good questioning, modelling and challenge by the teacher encouraged pupils to keep practising their dancing skills to improve the quality of their movements.
- In the best lessons seen, teachers plan activities and use a wide variety of resources that enthuse and cater for the full range of needs and abilities. Teachers check up very regularly on how well pupils are learning and listen to pupils' own views on this. Any misconceptions or difficulties are dealt with and pupils are helped to move on in their learning.
- Progress slows in the few lessons where planning for learning for pupils of different abilities is not as effective as it should be.
- Teachers' written feedback is not effective enough to support consistently outstanding progress. Although marking is frequent and teachers' comments are encouraging, they do not regularly specify how well pupils are doing in relation to their targets, and follow up activities to help

pupils learn from their mistakes are infrequently set. Teachers do not always correct spelling, grammar and punctuation errors in pupils' writing in subjects other than English.

- With the additional funding that the school received to support underachieving pupils, the school increased the number of support staff working both in class and with identified groups withdrawn from lessons. This high quality additional support is ensuring that those pupils are making faster progress. For example, the progress made from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 last year for those pupils exceeded the progress made by the whole cohort in both reading and mathematics.
- Regular homework ensures that pupils are able to expand and deepen their learning well. Additionally, pupils at Key Stage 2 are set half-termly themed projects in which they choose how to research and how to present their work to their peers. This is highly effective in developing independent learning and the application of a range of skills which interests each individual pupil. For example, last year, Year 6 pupils researched Shakespeare. Presentations took various forms such as video documentaries, poetry and paintings all prepared by the pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils behave with great courtesy and respect towards all. Pupils who join the school at other than the usual times told inspectors that they were welcomed and integrated with speed and ease.
- Pupils of all backgrounds get on extremely well together. Adults model excellent relationships and daily assemblies are used to reinforce the school's aim of ensuring that the school is 'a place where everyone is cared for and loved'.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and this makes a very strong contribution to their successful learning. Typically, they work very well in pairs and groups, sharing ideas, challenging and supporting each other and together producing work of good quality.
- Pupils were involved in designing the behaviour policy and they say it is applied consistently and is highly effective in ensuring high standards of behaviour.
- Pupils are aware of all forms of bullying, including prejudicial behaviours. They proudly say that, in this culturally diverse and inclusive school, all get on extremely well together. The last reported racist incident dates back to 2007.
- On the very rare occasion that a behavioural incident occurs, it is dealt with efficiently by the adults in the school.
- Parents and pupils say they feel very safe in school and pupils are astutely aware of unsafe situations. They know, for instance, how to keep themselves safe on the internet, to avoid involvement with gangs and the dangers of substance abuse.
- Attendance is well above average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, staff and governing body passionately share the same vision, aspiring for excellence in achievement, care and personal development for every pupil.
- Since the previous inspection there has been a strong focus on improving literacy which has resulted in pupils' outstanding achievement in reading. The good quality teaching has been maintained and consolidated.
- Highly effective processes of self-evaluation have helped leaders to identify accurately the school's priorities and to guide planning for improvement.
- Appraisal procedures for staff follow a detailed analysis of progress information of the pupils taught by each teacher and teaching assistant. This information is used to set ambitious individual targets for improving the quality of teaching and support. The governing body also

pays close attention to this information when taking decisions about teachers' pay.

- Teachers and teaching assistants are supported to improve their performance through frequent lesson observation feedback, training, mentoring and through sharing best practice with teachers in four other schools. Leaders, however, have not paid enough attention to the quality of teachers' marking, which could be improved.
 - The school promotes equality of opportunity well through, for example, breaking down stereotypical views by being the only school to enter a boys' group into an annual local dance competition. Through frequently promoting the school's values and beliefs, leaders have ensured that the school is a harmonious community where all are valued and included.
 - The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils enjoy participating in the choir and musical ensemble. Leaders have not however ensured that the planned curriculum is used effectively to extend the learning of mathematical skills.
 - Excellent attention is paid to promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For instance, when learning about fair trade, pupils organised a fair trade café and supported the charity with the profits earned.
 - The school works well with parents and carers in helping them to support their children at home, particularly in learning to read and with mathematics. The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body monitors the work of the school well through frequent visits to the school during which individual governors meet their link subject leader, observe teaching and talk to pupils. Governors support and challenge leaders at all levels well in order to drive forward improvements in all aspects of the school's work.
 - The governing body is aware of the school's overall strengths and weaknesses as the governors participate in the school's self-evaluation processes. They are well informed about pupil performance across the year groups and the impact of specific additional funding to support targeted groups.
 - All statutory duties are met, including arrangements for safeguarding.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	100734
Local authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	402832

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Bisi Ogunbambi
Headteacher	Frances Holland
Date of previous school inspection	12 December 2007
Telephone number	020 8692 1898
Fax number	020 8694 0136
Email address	admin@ststephensce.lewisham.sch.uk

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