

# St Stephen's Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102704
<b>Local Authority</b>	Newham
<b>Inspection number</b>	355241
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Richard Potts

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–5
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	146
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jayadevan Pillai
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Johnson OBE
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Whitfield Road Newham London E6 1AS
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 14 lessons and parts of lessons involving three teachers and several support staff. They held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher of the federation, and with the deputy headteacher of the nursery. Inspectors also met with the members of the governing body and with a number of parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documents, including development plans, tracking information, policies and procedures, governing body minutes, monitoring reports, curriculum plans and individual children's 'special books', for evidence of progress. In addition, inspectors considered 40 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and those completed by 24 staff.

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

- How much progress do all groups of children make, particularly those learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities?
- How well are assessment and tracking systems used to help raise children's attainment and progress?
- How well does provision promote children's independence as learners?
- How effective has the school been in improving regular attendance?

## Information about the school

This nursery school is part of a federation, which was established in April 2010. This brings together, under a federation headteacher and a single governing body, the nursery, a children's centre offering day-care provision and a primary school. The headteacher of the primary school assumed responsibility for the leadership and management of the nursery when the federation was established. A midwifery group practice, for which the governing body is not responsible, shares the site.

The nursery is larger than average, providing places for 90 children in the morning session and a further 90 children in the afternoon. It serves a diverse ethnic and cultural community where 96% of the children are from minority ethnic backgrounds, of which 78% are of Asian origin, and 85% of the children speak English as an additional language. The number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly related to behavioural or physical difficulties, is above average.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

St Stephen's Nursery is an outstanding school that not only allows children to achieve exceptionally well, but also to develop into confident, caring, independent and enthusiastic learners. Due to excellent teaching and an exceptionally wide range of stimulating and interesting activities, children make outstanding progress and by the time they leave, most children reach the expected level of attainment for their age and a substantial minority exceed it. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and hold it in high esteem. As one commented, 'One could not find a better school. The staff are excellent and there are various activities at all times for children, parents and carers.'

Children's behaviour is excellent and staff deal very well with the few who find it harder to behave. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children know what constitutes right and wrong. They are eager volunteers for tasks such as preparing the snack-time fruit and tidying the indoor and outdoor learning spaces. Relationships between adults and children are exemplary and this is one of the nursery's key strengths. Children's attitudes to their peers reflect these strong and respectful relationships, so they get on well together and show consideration for each other when sharing activities and equipment.

Attendance is good because parents and carers have been helped to recognise the link between regular attendance and high achievement. The nursery has made attendance one of its priority improvement areas, as a result of which, fewer families are taking extended holidays during term time. Children feel safe and secure in their surroundings and demonstrate a high degree of independence that enables them to readily engage in new activities. Exceptional attention is paid to all aspects of children's welfare, so that the foundations for a healthy lifestyle, for enjoying and achieving in their learning, for contributing towards their community and for developing a sense of responsibility are extremely well embedded. Provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is excellent, so they achieve the challenging targets set out in their individual education plans.

Adults work in a cohesive team to create a stimulating, innovative and highly effective learning environment. Detailed teaching plans, based on accurate assessment and meticulous record-keeping, cover all the areas of learning and development. Children's language awareness is very well developed through their work in communication, language and literacy, but less effectively in the other areas of learning because teaching plans do not always identify the key vocabulary associated with them.

The curriculum is exceptionally broad, with imaginative use of the site supplemented by trips to local places of interest. The school's links with its community and the cohesion fostered by it are outstanding. A 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World' session

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involved over 60 parents and carers, drawn from across the community, in observing and participating in their children's learning.

The headteacher, supported by a highly effective and dedicated senior leadership team, has achieved much in a short time. Comprehensive and precise improvement plans, based on accurate self-evaluation, identify the correct priorities. The staff team is highly effective and unified under her vision for the future. Evidence indicates that children's progress, already at a high rate, is accelerating. Since the last inspection, the nursery has seen an improvement in almost every aspect of its work. This enviable track record, coupled with the high quality of its self-evaluation and improvement planning, underpins an excellent capacity for further improvement.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise children's attainment in communication, language and literacy by:
  - refining assessment procedures, by December 2011, so that the acquisition of key vocabulary across all areas of learning and development is systematically monitored
  - improving lesson planning by specifying key vocabulary in all aspects of learning and how it will be taught, by September 2011.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of children**

**1**

Children join the nursery with skills and understanding that are well below expected levels for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development. All groups of children were seen to be making equally outstanding progress during the inspection, including those who are new to learning English, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The introduction of 'Every Child a Talker' has had a positive impact in developing children's speaking and listening skills and they are keen to talk about what they are doing and to make links with their learning elsewhere. This was seen when a group was handling giant African snails and discussing what they ate: 'Lettuce that's good. Not sweets that make them fat.'

Children demonstrate excellent understanding and tolerance when listening to others. They are happy to share their ideas and thoughts with adults and eager to try new experiences. Children understand the elements of a healthy lifestyle and enjoy their fruit snack. Adults skilfully use this time to initiate conversation and to encourage children to talk. As a result, children's vocabulary and spoken language are very well developed. However, opportunities are not always taken to systematically extend children's spoken English in all aspects of their work by identifying key vocabulary and carefully monitoring the children's acquisition of it.

The excellent indoor and outdoor learning environments are used extremely well to ensure that children's progress is maintained in all areas of learning and development. Strong links with the community are a particular strength of the nursery. Teachers use every opportunity to extend children's spiritual and cultural development through engaging with parents and carers and learning about festivals and customs.

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*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Children's attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of children's learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which children feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Children's behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which children develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Children's attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

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

## How effective is the provision?

Adults know children's individual interests well and skilfully exploit these to encourage further learning. Support staff are highly effective in caring for children and in driving their learning forward. The deployment of bilingual staff to promote children's understanding and to act as positive role models of language effectively underpins children's acquisition of English.

Children's knowledge, skills and understanding are constantly and accurately assessed. The resulting information is used to monitor the progress of groups and individuals and to tailor teaching plans to meet their learning needs. Each child has a 'special book' which charts their progress and serves as an excellent prompt to discussions with both the children and their parents and carers. The nursery is highly successful in engaging parents and carers in their children's learning and provides high-quality advice and guidance to them about how to support their children's progress and development.

The quality of care, guidance and support given to children is outstanding. The nursery is a welcoming, secure and stimulating environment. Children who are in need of more support are exceptionally well guided by staff and given the same equality of opportunity as their peers. Support for children whose circumstances make them particularly

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vulnerable is an established and highly effective part of provision, enabling all to enjoy and achieve.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and leadership team successfully promote a shared vision and the highest expectations among staff. There is an unremitting focus on improving outcomes for children, based on detailed, precise and accurate analysis of performance. Now part of a federation, the leadership team correctly identifies its role as providing the foundation for further, seamless, educational success as children progress through the nursery and into the primary school. Staff feel valued and supported and morale is very high.

The nursery's particular success in reaching out and engaging with its community has made a significant contribution to cohesion and every opportunity is taken to extend children's awareness of the different world cultures represented in their area. Equality of opportunity lies at the heart of the nursery's work and underpins its provision, so that outcomes for all children are equally positive.

The work of the governing body is excellent and the growing success of the nursery within the broader federation bears testimony to the foresight, passion and dedication of its members. The governing body benefits from exemplary links with the community, an unshakeable determination to get the best for the children and excellent relationships, which enable it to provide support while holding the leadership team robustly to account. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were found to be outstanding. There is a comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues that extends to staff and governors, all of whom have benefited from regular training. As a result, safeguarding permeates all aspects of the nursery's work and links with other agencies are exemplary.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires expressed very positive views about the school.. Capturing the mood of the majority, one commented, 'St Stephen's is a very good school. I am very happy overall.' A very small number of parents and carers expressed concerns about the way children's behaviour was managed. Over the time of their visit, inspectors found that behaviour was exemplary and that staff dealt very well with those who found it harder to behave appropriately.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at St Stephen's Nursery 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 40 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 180 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	85	5	13	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	65	12	30	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	29	73	11	28	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	63	13	33	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	63	12	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	68	11	28	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	60	12	30	1	3	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)	20	50	11	28	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	55	16	40	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	53	14	35	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	55	14	35	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	63	11	28	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	83	7	18	0	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 children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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 children. 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](http://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 child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
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 children 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of children.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

**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.**



15 June 2011

Dear Children

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

It was lovely to meet you when we came to visit your nursery. We really liked so many of the things that you do. We enjoyed watching you playing in the cave and the willow tunnel and looking after your sunflowers in the garden. We thought your impressions of the animals in the jungle and the ocean were really lifelike!

You go to an outstanding nursery. Here are some of the best things about it.

- The adults look after you very well and make sure you have an excellent range of interesting and exciting things to do.
- You thoroughly enjoy school and are very good at keeping safe and healthy.
- You behave extremely well and are polite and kind to each other and to the adults.
- You learn really quickly.

This is what we are asking your nursery to do next, so it gets even better.

- Help you to achieve even more, by making sure that the teachers take every opportunity to develop your English language skills.

Thank you again for talking to us about what you like doing. You and your families can help by making sure you come to nursery every day.

Yours sincerely

Richard Potts

Lead inspector

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