

Stillness Junior School

Brockley Rise, Forest Hill, London, SE23 1NH

Inspection dates 12–13 November 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders continue to lead the school with vigour and dedication. They have built on the previous strengths in leadership and management with a strong focus on pupils' learning.
- Pupils behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and well-mannered and have very positive attitudes to learning.
- Regular checks on safeguarding procedures ensure that the school is a very safe place for pupils.
- From above average starting points pupils make good progress. Attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to make good progress.
- Leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers plan lessons that interest and motivate pupils.
- The curriculum is strong. It covers a good range of subjects and activities. It provides for pupils' academic and personal development effectively.
- There are clear systems for checking that all pupils are making progress and for providing them with support where needed.
- Governors are skilful and knowledgeable and hold the school to account effectively.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding because teachers do not always provide precise-enough information in their marking for pupils to understand how to improve their work. This is the case especially in writing where standards are not as high as those in reading.
- Achievement is not outstanding because too few Year 6 pupils made better than expected progress in the 2014 tests. This was because a small but significant number of last year's Year 6 pupils experienced particular challenges.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or part lessons. Six lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also made a number of short visits to lessons, observed the teaching of reading, listened to pupils read and attended assemblies and after-school clubs.
- They held discussions with the headteacher and other senior leaders, subject leaders, pupils and governors. The lead inspector had a discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school improvement plan, information on pupils' current progress, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' work and looked in their exercise books.
- The inspectors took account of the 111 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, received two calls and three emails from parents, and analysed 20 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter Thrussell	Additional Inspector
Sue Hillman	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Stillness Junior School is larger than the average sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average. About a third are White British followed by Black Caribbean, pupils from a mixed background and those from an African heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is above average but few are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, is broadly average at around a fifth of the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The executive headteacher leads another local primary school as well as Stillness Junior School. The day-to-day running of the school is carried out by the head of school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements to outstanding by ensuring that teachers:
 - give more precise feedback to pupils in their marking about how to improve their work, especially in writing
 - help pupils to better understand how to use the guidance in the feedback they receive to improve their work, especially in writing.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher and head of school provide robust leadership that has built strongly on the previous strengths of the school. They have continued to improve the quality of teaching and maintained the high standards of attainment. The drop in pupils' progress last year is being tackled successfully and the current Year 6 is on track to achieve well and reach their targets.
- The school's systems for checking how well it is doing are robust. As a result, senior and middle leaders identify accurately what the school still needs to improve and to maintain what is already outstanding including pupils' behaviour. Staff know how well individual pupils are making progress and work well as a team to provide appropriate support. The way the school checks how well it is doing has improved since the last inspection and focuses squarely on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress.
- The procedures for managing staff performance are strong. Teachers have targets that are related to the school's priorities for development and are reviewed thoroughly each year by senior leaders. Teachers receive well-targeted support from leaders and their colleagues and this is having a positive impact on improving teaching.
- The school uses data effectively to check the progress of individual pupils. Through termly progress reviews, subject and year-team leaders pinpoint those who need extra help and draw up detailed action plans. As a result, all pupils make good progress and some make outstanding progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are catered for well and, as a result, also make good progress. Teachers also ensure that the most able are stretched by always identifying extra challenges for them in lessons.
- Good use is made of the extra funding to help disadvantaged pupils make the most of what the school has to offer. The impact of this is evident in the way that the gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others has narrowed over time. Although this gap widened in last year's Year 6 the school's data show that this is being tackled successfully and the gap is once again narrowing successfully.
- The school successfully tackles discrimination, promotes equality of opportunity and fosters good relations.
- The extra funding available to promote sports and physical education is used effectively. Training for staff, new equipment and specialist coaching are increasing pupils' participation in sporting activities and improving the teaching of physical education.
- The school ensures that pupils experience a wide range of subjects and activities. Good quality provision for music for example, and a range of after-school activities provides pupils with a rich and vibrant experience that adds relevance and interest to their learning.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. A wide range of additional activities, including visits and cultural events and work to raise money for charities here and overseas, helps to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. This is enhanced by the many ways in which pupils take on responsibilities in the school.
- The great majority of parents are positive about the school. The school has worked hard to involve parents with initiatives such as coffee mornings and literacy and numeracy impact mornings. A few parents complain that communication with the school is difficult and that their views are not listened to. Evidence indicates that communication with parents has improved but that the school's efforts have not yet changed the perceptions of a few parents.
- The local authority judges the school to need only light-touch support. The executive headteacher oversees another local primary school and senior leaders support other schools in the local authority.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body carries out its statutory functions well. It has a good range of reliable information about pupils' achievements, which it uses well to hold senior leaders to account. Governors have a good understanding of how additional funding is being used, and its impact, and analyse regularly the achievement gap between those supported by the pupil premium and others. Governors are skilled in comparing the school's performance with that of other schools locally and nationally so that can gain an accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses.
 - The governing body has an accurate understanding of teaching quality and this is linked to decisions about teachers' performance and pay. Governors supplement the use of data by making regular visits to the school to observe its work, for example, with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. As a result they have a detailed understanding of the school's performance.
 - Governors take their responsibilities for safeguarding seriously and have effective procedures to ensure that statutory requirements are met.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. All staff and most parents who responded to the questionnaires believe that behaviour is at least good and managed well by teachers. Pupils who spoke to inspectors said that behaviour was generally good.
- In almost all lessons, in assembly, at playtimes and in the 'lunch hut' pupils behave very well. They play very well together, sharing the play equipment often negotiating sensibly whose turn it is to play table tennis or use the big chessboard, for example.
- Pupils are polite, well-mannered and friendly to each other, staff and visitors. Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive. Pupils are respectful towards their teachers and readily help each other.
- Pupils are especially good at working together in pairs or groups to share ideas and develop their understanding. They have very positive attitudes towards their learning. In most lessons pupils are fully involved in their work and take pride in making it neat and tidy.
- Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibilities and do so very enthusiastically. For example, members of the school council, school ambassadors, play leaders, and peer mediators all play a strong part in the school's life. Pupils speak enthusiastically of their roles and take great pride in helping others.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils are very clear that they feel very safe and most parents who responded to the questionnaire agree. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe, including using the internet safely.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and how it can have a negative effect on others' self-esteem. Those that spoke to inspectors said that bullying does happen occasionally but that it is dealt with effectively.
- Attendance is above average, illustrating how much pupils enjoy coming to school. The school works closely with parents to maintain good levels of attendance. Pupils are punctual to lessons, ensuring that no time for learning is wasted.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good with examples of outstanding practice. This is shown by the school's assessments of pupils' achievements and its analysis of teaching quality, pupils' work in their books as well as inspectors' observations of teaching and learning.
- Teachers are mostly successful at making sure that pupils' attitudes to learning are good and that they are engaged and absorbed in their work. Teachers often encourage pupils well, for example to work together in pairs or groups, and this has a notable impact on their learning and on their relationships with each other.
- Teachers often use imaginative activities that grab pupils' interest and encourages them to deepen their understanding, for example, when writing from another person's point of view in Year 5. Pupils respond very well to their teachers and have a strong desire to do well. This has a positive impact on their learning.
- Reading, writing and mathematics are generally taught well and teachers support the progress of the different ability groups effectively, for example in guided reading in Year 6. Other adults often provide good support for pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Strategies such as small group work for those pupils who need extra help are also effective, ensuring that pupils make good progress from different starting points.
- Teachers make very clear what they expect pupils to learn in each lesson and the steps they need to take to achieve the target. Classroom routines are well established so that pupils know how to respond to teachers' instructions. Work, such as additional tasks, is provided for the more able to ensure they are challenged effectively.
- Teachers mark and assess pupils' work regularly and frequently. Marking is helpful and teachers give pupils a clear idea of what they did well and what they could improve, often setting individual additional tasks to aid understanding. However, this feedback does not always provide precise enough information about how to improve their work. Although pupils know how well they are doing, they do not always understand how to use the feedback to improve their next piece of work especially in writing.

- Teachers are often skilful at using questions to probe pupils' understanding and deepen their learning. They give pupils time to think before answering and to pass the question 'to a friend' if they are not sure of the answer. This has a strong impact on their progress as well as on their eagerness to contribute to their ideas and thoughts.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils start school in Year 3 with standards that are above average. In the past, pupils made very strong progress to reach high standards by the end of Year 6. Although standards remained high in 2014, the proportion making expected progress and more than expected progress slipped.
- The school's information about pupils' achievement, supported by work in pupils' books, shows that over time progress is good. It also shows that the dip in progress in last year's Year 6 is being tackled successfully. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to achieve well in relation to their starting points, including those who speak English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic groups.
- The most able pupils achieve well because they are given work that challenges them and deepens their understanding, as seen in a Year 4 literacy lesson where pupils were writing a newspaper article.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from a range of starting points. This is also the case for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This is partly because teachers and teaching assistants set them work that match their needs and abilities. It is also because the school identifies those who are falling behind effectively and provides these pupils with good support.
- In 2013, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 did as well as pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2014, the attainment gap in these subjects widened and disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 last year were about three and half terms behind their peers and two and half terms behind pupils nationally. The school's information and work in pupils' books indicates that currently disadvantaged pupils are making as good progress as their peers.
- Pupils enjoy reading and they achieve well. In the 2014 tests Year 6 pupils did better in reading than in writing and mathematics. The allocation of time for guided reading and good teaching have helped pupils to become confident readers.

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	100704
Local authority	London Borough of Lewisham
Inspection number	449376

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Simms
Headteacher	Mrs Selina Sharpe
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 December 2010
Telephone number	020 8690 1416
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