

Titchmarsh Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	121994
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380379
Inspection dates	23–24 February 2012
Lead inspector	Susan Thomas-Pounce

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Albin Wallace
Headteacher	Josephine Milton
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Thomas-Pounce

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed seven lessons taught by seven teachers, together with a number of shorter observations. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff, a parent and members of the governing body. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspector observed the school's work, listened to pupils read, and scrutinised pupils' books, monitoring and assessment information and teachers' planning. Responses to inspection questionnaires from staff and pupils were scrutinised, as well as 56 received from parents and carers.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school, and the vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs varies from year to year but is higher than the national average. Their range of needs includes specific learning difficulties, language difficulties and behavioural and emotional difficulties. Pupils transfer to two local middle schools at the end of Year 4.

The school has achieved National Healthy Schools status and a number of external awards including the International School and Eco School awards. The school has recently built a school hall, which also serves as a purpose-built space for physical education and other whole-school activities, and a new classroom that enables all year groups to be taught separately for the core subjects.

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 treated as individuals and they feel extremely safe and well cared for. The warm, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere is highly regarded by parents and carers. Since the last inspection, the school has significantly improved the quality of provision across the school. It is not yet outstanding because although achievement in reading is outstanding, progress in mathematics and writing is good.
- From below-average starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress. By the time pupils leave school in Year 4, their attainment is broadly average. Robust tracking of pupils' progress has enabled the school to identify underachieving pupils and those with additional needs, and give them extra help. Consequently, achievement is good for all groups of pupils.
- Teaching is good. An increasing amount of outstanding practice, particularly in the teaching of reading, results in pupils making exceptional progress. In Year 2, an above-average proportion reach the highest levels in reading tests, and an increasing number in writing. However, this is not the case in mathematics and this means that progress in numeracy is not as fast as it could be.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and their attendance is above average. They are extremely enthusiastic about their learning and respond extremely well to adults and each other in a safe and well-maintained learning environment.
- The headteacher leads the school very well. She has created a strong team ethos where high levels of professional training and discussion are shared across the school. All subject leaders and members of the governing body have high expectations. They constantly review the school's performance, including teaching, and are clear about the direction the school must take to secure further improvements. The outstanding curriculum is adapted extremely well to meet the needs of the pupils. Many excellent experiences ensure the pupils'

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spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more pupils in Key Stage 1 reach the higher levels for their age in mathematics by:
 - providing consistently high levels of challenge in lessons to increase the rate at which they learn
 - providing more opportunities for problem-solving and investigative work

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils are well motivated and enthusiastic to learn new skills and concepts. Throughout the school, the pupils' work on display and in their books clearly shows the good progress they make in their written work and art. They confidently use their reading, writing, communication and mathematics skills in a range of other subjects, demonstrating that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. They particularly enjoy activities where they can discuss and share their ideas with each other. For instance, by working together in small groups, pupils in a science lesson in Year 3 on keeping warm developed communication, literacy, numeracy and investigative skills very effectively. They confidently discussed and reviewed each other's work, making well-thought-out suggestions as to how they could test insulation.

Pupils' current work and the school's own data show that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 4 is improving. Pupils make the best progress in reading and their attainment is above average. This is because of the effective whole-school strategies to encourage a love of reading, including the well-attended reading group led by the Chair of the Governing Body. In addition, carefully targeted use of interventions with those who require additional support helps to accelerate their reading skills. Many pupils reach the higher levels in reading, and increasingly so in writing, by the end of Year 2. However, pupils do not reach the higher levels in mathematics because the tasks they are set are not always challenging enough to push their learning on at a faster rate. The school is aware that it needs to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop problem-solving skills.

When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage their skills and abilities are below those typical for their age, particularly in language and communication. The good provision ensures they settle quickly and enables them to make great strides in their learning. Improvements in teaching and learning are increasing the progress pupils make in lessons. Work in lessons and in their books shows that pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school to Year 4. The care and support they

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receive is carefully targeted to assist their needs and as a result of rapid diagnosis and evaluation of the support required, these pupils thrive at school. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are rightly confident that their children are achieving well.

Quality of teaching

Staff provide welcoming, interesting and attractive classrooms, which support learning well. The quality of teaching has improved and has a strong impact on pupils' outstanding behaviour and extremely positive attitudes to their learning. Lessons provide numerous opportunities for pupils to develop high levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding; they demonstrate a clear sense of right and wrong and a high level of empathy for those less fortunate than themselves.

Teachers are confident and enthusiastic practitioners and their subject knowledge is good. Lessons are interesting and class teachers make good use of information and communication technology to engage pupils' interest. Pupils relate well to one another and their teachers. Pair and group work is a feature of many lessons and this develops pupils' social skills very effectively. Experienced teaching assistants support learning very effectively for the various ability groups within each class. Good-quality teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to achieve well through a good balance of activities.

Whilst teaching is good overall, there is some outstanding teaching, characterised by a high level of challenge, exactly tuned to the needs and capabilities of specific groups. This was particularly evident in the teaching of reading observed during the inspection. Teachers know their pupils' skills and prior learning well and, most of the time, they provide appropriate work, with effective support for those with learning difficulties. However, sometimes the level of challenge is not high enough for those in Years 1 and 2 who could do more difficult work in mathematics. Pupils know their targets. Robust marking gives pupils a good overview of their progress and ensures they understand what they need to do to improve their work. Teaching is improving but is not yet at a level that will accelerate pupils' progress to outstanding in all year groups. Parents and carers are confident that the teaching of their children at the school is good, and inspection findings support this view.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school during the inspection and from records held by the school is outstanding. There have been no exclusions for several years. Pupils love coming to school and they all know they are here to learn and what they have to do to ensure this happens. Consequently, they make an exceptional contribution to a safe, positive learning environment. Pupils know there is always someone they can turn to should problems arise. They acquire an outstanding awareness of how to keep themselves and others safe and how to live healthily. Instances of bullying are extremely rare and pupils say when it happens it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Workshops have been held for pupils and their

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parents and carers about issues such as cyber-bullying and pupils are extremely well aware of aspects such as e-safety. Pupils were keen to show how much they enjoy the responsibility of being a member of the school council or being Reading Buddies with pupils in other classes. The school council is justifiably proud of the input it has made to influence changes.

Pupils show very caring attitudes to each other and the environment, as the eco council work shows. An example of the very positive attitudes are seen during the inspection was how attentively they listened, as pupils in Year 4 presented a lively assembly on Africa. They demonstrate both exceptional understanding of other cultures and tolerance of differences, contributing to their outstanding behaviour and safety. They say they feel extremely happy and secure in school; this is reflected in their above-average levels of attendance and contributes significantly to their enjoyment of school. Parents and carers and all groups of pupil expressed highly positive views about behaviour and safety.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and other leaders have an accurate view of the work of the school. Regular monitoring of teaching and other aspects means that the school's self-evaluation provides a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Determined efforts to improve the school's effectiveness by the headteacher with the strong support of the governing body and the staff have been effective. This has consolidated good aspects of the school since the previous inspection as well as firmly tackling areas for development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. This is seen in the excellence of their behaviour and the respect and understanding with which all groups of pupils interact. Time for reflection is built into many activities, including the daily act of collective worship. The school has good links with schools and communities in other areas, including abroad, which is recognised through the achievement of the International School Award. Well-developed international links are a strong feature of the school's philosophy. Connections with the local church are very strong. The school has longstanding links with other local schools. During the inspection middle school pupils presented awards to the pupils who were delighted that their work and ideas were recognised and valued.

Leaders track the progress of individuals and groups closely; they take swift action to prevent anyone from falling behind. This has led to gaps in pupil achievement closing, especially in writing. Provision to secure equality of opportunity for pupils and tackle discrimination is very secure. The governing body conducts regular checks on the school. Its members' expertise and their close involvement in the life of the school ensure they present a high level of challenge and informed support. The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures are of excellent quality and that all statutory requirements, including child protection, are regularly reviewed and approved. The outstanding curriculum meets pupils' needs exceptionally well and contributes significantly to their enjoyment by providing pupils with a wide range of memorable experiences. One pupil asked the inspector, 'Do you know all the

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wonderful things we can do?’ Pupils, parents and carers praise the activity days and the way that different subjects are integrated together in a natural way. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned inspection questionnaires show strong confidence in the leadership of the headteacher and the staff team. They are impressed with the steps taken to improve to the accommodation which now provides excellent additional learning spaces. Based on improvements that have already been made since the previous inspection, the school has a good capacity to continue improving.

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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.



27 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Titchmarsh Church of England Primary School, Kettering, NN14 3DR

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you working in lessons and talking with so many of you. I was pleased to hear that you like your school very much and enjoy helping each other.

Yours is a good school with many strengths. You like coming to school and you are very keen to learn. Your behaviour is excellent, you get on well together and you know how to keep yourselves safe. Your teachers listen carefully to your ideas and make your lessons interesting. The adults in school make sure that you are very well looked after. The teaching in your school is good and sometimes better than this, and it means that, together with your positive attitudes to work, you make good progress and achieve well. The school's leaders and managers work very well together to provide you with a good education.

Even in good schools, there are some things that could be better. You told me that you find your lessons interesting and usually challenging. To make the learning even better, I have asked your teachers to make sure that children in the first two years of the school, who could do more difficult work, have better opportunities to develop their mathematical skills. This will help you make even faster progress.

Each of you can play your part in making this school even better by continuing to work hard to meet the challenging targets teachers set for you.

Yours sincerely

Susan Thomas-Pounce
Lead inspector

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