

# St Stephen's Church of England Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	109167
<b>Local authority</b>	South Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	377885
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Peter Clifton

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	318
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Carolyn Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bronwen Kucharski
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19–20 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Lansdown Road Kingswood Bristol BS15 1XD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01454 867175
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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	28–29 February 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	377885



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Peter Clifton Additional inspector

Tracey Kneale Additional inspector

Shela Rowan Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Twenty-six lessons were visited and 13 teachers observed teaching. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school improvement plan, the school's information on pupils' progress, samples of pupils' work and information sent home to parents and carers. The responses to 127 questionnaires from parents and carers, 34 responses from staff and 100 pupil responses were examined and analysed.

## Information about the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a number of other ethnic backgrounds represented in small numbers. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with that found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. There is a breakfast club, run by the governing body. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has National Healthy Schools Plus Status and the Eco-Schools Bronze Award.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The standards attained by pupils and the quality of teaching have improved since the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher and other leaders demonstrate an ambitious vision for the school and are successfully driving improvements. However, the school is not yet good because teaching is not consistently good and pupils' achievement is no more than satisfactory.
- The rise in pupils' standards and rates of progress since the last inspection has been more marked in reading and mathematics than in writing. The use of talk, when pupils share their ideas with each other, is established across the school in all lessons and is helping to improve creative ideas for writing. However, opportunities for pupils to get their ideas down on paper are missed, particularly in subjects other than English.
- Teaching is satisfactory with clear evidence of good practice in some classes. However, this is not yet good enough to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress over time in all classes. Teachers share each lesson's 'steps to success' with pupils and this means that pupils are clear about what they are expected to achieve. However, in several lessons the pace of learning, particularly for more-able pupils, is too slow. Marking in English is a strength.
- Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and disruption to lessons is uncommon. Pupils, parents and carers confirm that pupils feel safe. Pupils enjoy working with each other in lessons and their attendance is above average. Older pupils confirm that behaviour is getting better and that incidents of bullying are infrequent.

The leadership of teaching and the management of staff performance are satisfactory, although the monitoring of lessons does not yet extend across the whole curriculum. Initiatives to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Links with Africa give the pupils a powerful insight into different cultures.

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- Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by December 2012 by:
  - ensuring that the pace of lessons is consistently brisk, particularly during input by teachers
  - refining teachers' planning so that the work they set meets the needs of different groups of pupils and challenges all of them
  - ensuring that the marking of pupils' work in all subjects is used effectively to help pupils improve.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
  - extending the monitoring of lessons across the curriculum to embed improvements in teaching
  - ensuring that opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in different subjects are fully exploited.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Nearly all parents and carers feel that their children make good progress and are helped to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. The lessons observed and pupils' work seen showed that, although some pupils make good progress, overall their progress and achievement are no more than satisfactory.

Pupils' attainment is now average in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave school. As pupils come into school with average attainment, this means that their progress from their starting points is in line with national expectations. This shows a marked improvement from their performance at the time of the last inspection, when their attainment was below average. Pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening skills because these are consistently promoted well in lessons across different subjects. Younger children read fluently and accurately. However, there are a few who have books which do not provide a sufficiently challenging reading experience. More-able readers in Year 4 expressed clear preferences about different authors, giving reasons for their choices.

Classroom initiatives to improve pupils' writing have been successful in boosting attainment and progress. The use of targets in lessons by pupils and the quality of marking in literacy books are both strengths. For example in Year 5, the pupils considered different types of complex sentences including using similes and metaphors. However, teachers' expectations of pupils' writing in geography and

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science lessons, for example, were lower and did not enable the pupils to build on these skills.

Pupils' progress in mathematics is satisfactory overall. Good progress was made by pupils working on perimeter and area in Year 5, because the work was challenging for all groups. However, progress is only satisfactory when, for example, basic misconceptions in pupils' learning are not identified and tackled quickly.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and the small number of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, make progress that is similar to other pupils. These pupils, together with those who are less able, are given additional help and guidance which enable them to work cooperatively and stay focused on their work.

### **Quality of teaching**

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire think that the teaching is good. Inspectors judged teaching to be satisfactory and found that it promotes at least satisfactory, and sometimes good, achievement. Relationships in lessons are positive; pupils are encouraged to share what they know and understand through answering teachers' questions and, on many occasions, lessons come alive when the pupils discuss their ideas with each other. Good reading habits are promoted through guided reading lessons, which provide opportunities for texts to be explored in depth as well as individual reading. The planned curriculum adds appropriately to pupils' learning experiences. Topics on Kenya, Uganda, China and India give the pupils a valuable insight into how others live and are used well to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In a lesson about a Kenyan school, the pupils were fascinated by the conditions in which the Kenyan children learned and how they took responsibility for looking after the school buildings.

In several lessons the pace of learning was too slow. Teachers can take too long recapping work or giving out information and this results in some pupils not achieving as much as they could. This particularly affects the more-able pupils who sometimes have to wait before receiving more challenging work. Occasionally there is a mismatch between the work set and the abilities of the pupils, particularly when linked to the use of their writing skills.

Good teaching was observed across all year groups. Features of these lessons included skilful and challenging questioning, which often required more lengthy explanations by the pupils, and brisk input by teachers. Short tasks closely linked to each lesson's 'steps to success' gave learning a strong sense of purpose. All these elements were present, for example, in a Year 5 science lesson about solids, liquids and gases.

Teachers' comments made in the pupils' English books are consistently helpful in suggesting how pupils can improve their work and time is given for the pupils to

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assess each other's work. However, this practice is not as strong in other subjects and about one quarter of the pupils indicated in the questionnaires that they only sometimes know how well they are doing.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The behaviour of pupils in all lessons observed was at least satisfactory. In a minority of lessons, some pupils were restless or not fully engaged because they found activities uninspiring. This is reflected in parent and carer and pupil questionnaires where a few concerns are expressed, but overall parents and carers state that their children are safe in school and that behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils comment that there are occasions when poor behaviour does interrupt their learning, but that these are uncommon and they state that behaviour overall is improving.

Pupils say they feel safe. Those who discussed this with inspectors said that there was some 'name calling' and 'falling out' between pupils and a few instances of unkind behaviour in the playground, but that these were usually short-lived and dealt with by staff. They clearly understand that there are different types of bullying and said that the school has had anti-bullying days which have covered the misuse of mobile phones and email. Overall, the school is a harmonious community and pupils' attendance and punctuality are good. Older pupils agreed that there was more kindness now being shown by the pupils than when they joined the school.

The school keeps detailed records of any behavioural incidents and these are fully investigated and support the assertion that behaviour is typically satisfactory over time. Rewards and sanctions are understood by the pupils and applied consistently by staff. Older pupils show a good awareness of the possible dangers of drugs, alcohol and smoking.

## **Leadership and management**

A period of stability in leadership and management has enabled the headteacher to drive through improvements and strengthen pupils' achievement since the time of the previous inspection. The focus on improving pupils' writing through the use of 'talk activities' and by modelling different writing types has been successful. Nevertheless, school leaders acknowledge that writing across the curriculum remains a weakness to be addressed. The samples of work in science reflect the school's recent focus on developing pupils' investigation skills. Other successes include raising teachers' expectations of pupils in mathematics and the better use of resources to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Subject leaders are developing their roles steadily and this is supported by a wide-ranging professional development programme.

The headteacher has put strategies in place to promote improvement in teaching, including the direct observation of lessons. This has led to an increase in the proportion of good or better lessons, and particularly in the teaching of literacy and numeracy where most of the observations have occurred. Leaders have rightly

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identified that they and subject leaders need to extend observations to other subjects on a more regular basis. While a few weaknesses remain, the evident success of action already taken demonstrates that the school has capacity for further improvement.

The impact of the school's developing curriculum can be seen in the rising trend in attainment. Although there is more for leaders at all levels and staff to do to promote better achievement for more-able pupils, the provision to promote equality and enable different groups of pupils to reach their full potential is satisfactory. The progress of different groups of pupils is tracked to ensure that there is no discrimination.

The governing body supports leaders effectively and its members are appropriately involved in looking at pupils' rates of progress. Their involvement in helping to set a clear direction through school improvement planning is increasing. The school is rigorous in ensuring that children are safe, and statutory requirements regarding safeguarding and child protection are met.

The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupil 'mediators' help younger pupils to behave well at lunchtimes. Part singing in assembly was an inspirational experience and exceptionally well led. Pupils are taught to be respectful of others from different backgrounds. Parents and carers feel that they are well informed and that school leaders respond to any concerns that they have.



## 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](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.

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.**



1 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Stephen's Church of England Junior School, Kingswood, BS15 1XD**

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when we visited your school and for your responses to the questionnaire. St Stephen's School provides you with a satisfactory education. Your headteacher and other leaders have made improvements since the time you were last visited by inspectors. These have helped you to improve your reading, writing and mathematics. Quite a few of you are now doing a lot better. We looked very carefully at the work you are given in lessons. Much of this is helping you to learn well but there are occasions when it is either too easy or too hard. We liked the helpful way your work is always marked in literacy.

You get on well together but some of you said that your behaviour was not always good enough, especially in the playground. However, you also told us that adults help to sort out any disagreements. Nearly all of you attend school well and on time. We particularly liked the work you are doing on different places like Africa as this is helping you to respect those who are different from yourselves.

We have asked the school to make sure that work is at just the right level for you, especially for those of you who find learning easy. Your teachers can also help you by ensuring lessons move on quickly so that you do not become restless, by giving you more opportunities to show how well you can write in all of your subjects and not just literacy and by making sure your work is always marked well. We would like your headteacher and other leaders in school to do more checking up that this is all happening.

Your headteacher, governing body and all the teachers are keen to help the school improve. You can help too by listening carefully to your teacher all of the time.

Thank you again for all your help and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Clifton  
Lead inspector

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