

Bemerton St John Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	126434
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	381233
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2012
Lead inspector	Susan Mann HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Vaughan Watts
Headteacher	Alun Richards
Date of previous school inspection	1-2 March 2010
School address	Lower Road Bemerton Salisbury SP2 9NW
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Mann

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ken Bryan

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors spent time in classrooms observing how pupils learn and they visited a total of 14 lessons. In all, seven teachers in school during the inspection were observed. Inspectors looked at pupils' work. In addition, meetings were held with pupils, governors, managers and subject leaders. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection and observed the school's work. Inspectors looked at some of the school's documentation, including previous and current data on achievement, policies and procedures, development plans, and minutes of meetings. Inspectors reviewed the responses given on 78 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as others completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Bemerton St John Church of England Aided Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection of 2010 and took up the post in September 2011. There have also been four new members of staff appointed since the last inspection. The school has met government floor standards.

The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with national average and includes pupils with behavioural difficulties and physical disabilities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Most pupils have a White British background. A few families come from Other White, Asian, African, or mixed backgrounds. The school has been awarded the Activemark, Artsmark Gold, the Healthy Schools Plus Award, and the International Schools 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

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. Leaders work effectively to ensure pupils reach their full potential through good-quality lessons and create a pleasant and enabling school environment. It is not yet outstanding because many encouraging initiatives are too recent to be fully effective yet.
- Achievement of pupils is good. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make equally good or better progress as their peers because of well-targeted intervention. Since September 2011, pupils have made particularly good progress in literacy and mathematics. Standards in reading are above average.
- Teaching is of good quality. Pupils enjoy well-prepared lessons that excite and interest them. All staff started using reliable assessment data at the beginning of the year. This is already having a strong impact on how teachers plan work to ensure that almost all pupils are challenged to achieve good standards in their learning. On occasions, lessons lack pace and teachers do not always plan for detailed questioning to challenge the most-able pupils. Sometimes, teaching assistants are not used to the best effect to support pupils' learning.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils at the school are outstanding. Pupils have exemplary attitudes to learning in the classroom and they are obviously very proud of their school. They all stress how safe they feel. The school has an extremely strong ethos of respect and care, which pupils respond to very well.
- Robust performance monitoring has been put in place throughout the school to develop and support staff. The leadership of teaching is good; the frequency of lesson observation has increased and the evaluation of its quality has had a positive impact on developing teaching. Senior leaders have identified priorities for development, especially in teaching, and have implemented effective strategies to bring about improvement. These have been introduced recently and many are still at an early stage of being embedded into everyday practice.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the quality of teaching so all lessons are consistently good or

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outstanding, to enable all pupils to fulfil their maximum potential by:

- embedding the rigorous systems used to monitor, evaluate and improve teaching implemented in September 2011
- developing lesson plans to include explicit provision for questioning and learning that will heighten the level of challenge for those pupils capable of achieving the highest standards
- enhancing the deployment of teaching assistants, so all make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning in the classroom.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Most pupils are achieving well over time and most have accelerated their rate of progress in this academic year. Most pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are in line with national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils leave the school with levels of achievement that exceed national expectations. The standards of reading by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. Almost all parents and carers completing the inspection questionnaire believed their children are making good progress at school and the inspection findings support this view.

Since September, reliable school data for all year groups in the current year indicate many pupils are progressing at a rapid rate, some achieving the expected progress for one year in half the time. Rigorous attention is given to measuring individual performance to enable interventions to be used if progress drops. As a result, any previous gaps in achievement between groups, including that between girls and boys and those pupils eligible for free school meals, have closed significantly. Work seen in the classrooms by inspectors confirms a high proportion of pupils attain above-average levels in reading, writing, and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs often make better than expected progress because of focused intervention managed capably by the special educational needs coordinator.

In the classroom, pupils develop their reading, written work and verbal skills across the curriculum, which stand them in good stead for moving to the next stage of their education. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children move quickly towards achieving the early learning goals so that most exceed national expectations when they move into Key Stage 1. In particular, children's understanding of phonics (linking letters with the sounds they make) is very good and enables the children to read and decode an above-average number of words for children of this age. Pupils capable of the highest standards in literacy and mathematics achieve acceptable standards in their work. Although, on a few occasions, teaching does not present enough demanding challenge for these pupils, so they do not achieve as well as they should.

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Quality of teaching

Most teaching is good for all pupils, especially in reading, writing, and mathematics. Teachers have a resolute focus on raising standards throughout the school. The curriculum favours learning in literacy and mathematics, but pupils also enjoy a wide range of other subjects and activities in the well-planned curriculum and these stimulate and deepen their interests. Lessons, visits, displays, and events support their social, moral, spiritual, and cultural development well. Teaching assistants are usually used appropriately throughout the school. Their presence enhances pupils' experiences in the classroom through supporting pupils in small groups and giving good support to pupils with disabilities. There are a few instances where the assistants are not briefed sufficiently well to provide sufficient support to assist pupils' learning.

A very large proportion of teaching in Reception Year is delivered through child-initiated play, which is planned effectively to cover all areas of learning. For example, a group of children thoroughly enjoyed recording results of an outdoor numbers game, whilst others chose to find and match shapes in the 'sand' tray. This supports children's learning and enjoyment in the Early Years Foundation Stage very skilfully. When one young child was asked what they liked best about school, they replied 'It's all too fun that I can't remember.'

A very large majority of parents and carers consider that their children are taught well at school and the inspection findings agree with this opinion. Well-developed subject knowledge enhances pupils' learning experiences. Assessment of pupils' learning is established as a key feature of teachers' planning and lessons are usually differentiated well to meet the various needs of pupils. Regular meetings review pupils' work and data on their achievements to enable teachers to be well-informed about how pupils are doing. As a result, pupils are often challenged well by work set. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, for example, pupils were excited at the prospect of writing about what they might find at the top of 'Jack's beanstalk'. After thinking about their ideas, they achieved their task well, writing complex and lengthy descriptions. In Key Stage 2, a mathematics lesson on the calculation of perimeter and area motivated pupils to think about the questions and they demonstrated good collaborative working and a keen readiness to work out the answer. There are a few occasions when teachers do not plan for enough rigorous challenge and, as a result, some opportunities for the most-capable pupils to stretch their abilities further are lost.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The overwhelming majority of pupils and parents or carers believes behaviour is good and children are safe at school and inspection findings support this view. Behaviour is very good over time. Pupils' exceptionally considerate and purposeful behaviour is a key feature of the school and, as a result, it has a very happy atmosphere. Pupils are very courteous and helpful to one another throughout the school day. They demonstrate an exceptionally high level of friendly respect to all staff and adults in the school.

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Pupils are consistently punctual in coming to school and the overall level of attendance is above average. They enter school eagerly at the beginning of the day, and almost all demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. They listen attentively and collaborate keenly with one another in partner talk and projects in lessons and in planning the school's trim trail. Excellent strategies are applied consistently throughout school to manage behaviour in a positive fashion when needed. Pupils are very responsive to them when, for example, the noise level in a classroom is becoming too loud. Pupils feel very safe at school and say incidences of any form of bullying are extremely rare.

Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to safety, including secure internet use. They assess risk in their outside play thoroughly so they are safe when playing on the field. Potentially vulnerable pupils and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given an excellent level of tailored care because all staff understand fully and meet their needs completely. Pupils are exceptionally inclusive in their attitudes to peers with different ethnic background or differing physical needs to themselves, which leads to a highly positive school environment.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, leadership team and governing body share a common goal to build on previous improvements and drive forward further purposeful developments. Processes of self-evaluation are thorough and already embedded so that significant change for the better is clearly evident throughout the school. A parent/carer said of the school, 'I am really impressed by the way the school has progressed in recent times.' This view of rapid improvement is shared by many parents and carers and is supported by the inspection evidence. The headteacher, consistently, communicates high expectations to all staff and the governing body and these prioritise improvements in teaching and achievement. The headteacher has successfully implemented many strategies to steer the school through improvements, including rigorous evaluation of teaching. This is developing well and has already resulted in improved achievement throughout the school. However, further development is needed as some lessons lack sufficient pace and challenge and teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively. Overall, improvements made since the previous inspection indicate that the school's capacity for improvement is good.

Robust performance management and opportunities for professional development are beginning to have a strong impact by building on the school's strengths. Leaders work effectively with cluster schools and the local authority to improve standards further. The governing body is well-informed and effective in its role. It challenges the leadership in a robust, yet supportive fashion so that decisions made are in the best interests of the school.

Safeguarding arrangements for pupils meet statutory requirements. Staff are trained in child protection matters and processes for handling concerns are rigorous and robust. Staff ensure that all pupils have equal access to all activities and no form of

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discrimination is tolerated. The well-being of each child is valued greatly by all staff, and the school community, consistently, upholds its motto, 'we live, we learn, we laugh together'. Most parents and carers believe the school helps them to participate in their children's learning, through parents' meetings, special workshops and events.

The curriculum is good and meets pupils' needs well. An imaginative approach to topics enhances pupils' learning and engages a wide range of pupils' interests. For example, pupils have email communication with the Polar Expedition team, who have visited the school to explain their work. This enables pupils to broaden their knowledge and use their literacy and information and communication technology skills to contact the team. The provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is thoughtful and inclusive so that activities are presented at the correct level, with appropriate equipment. The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good. For example, pupils' learning in religious education provides a breadth of learning opportunities about many beliefs and cultures, including exploring Hindu beliefs and practices.

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.



15 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bemerton St John Church of England Aided Primary School, Salisbury SP2 9NW

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed watching your lessons and looking at all the things you do at school. We are especially grateful to those of you who took time to talk to us about your school, and those pupils who read to us.

This is why we think yours is a good school.

- Your teachers do a good job in helping you to learn and they make sure lessons are usually interesting. Teachers understand how well you are doing, especially in literacy and mathematics, so they make sure you have tasks that will help you improve further and reach your targets.
- Most of you work hard at school and, as a result, you are doing well in your reading, writing, and numeracy work.
- We think your headteacher provides strong leadership for the school. There have been a lot of changes at your school in the last year which have made it a better school than it used to be. Your headteacher works well with the governing body and other leaders in the school to help the school to continue to improve even more.
- We were very impressed at how well you all behave and we have judged this part of the inspection to be outstanding. You help each other and you are proud of your school and always try to do your best which helps you to do well. We have asked your headteacher, governing body and teachers to look at ways to help your lessons be even better, so that you can all do as well as you can.

We hope you continue to enjoy your time at Bemerton, and continue to play your part in making it an even better school than it is now.

Yours sincerely

Susan Mann
Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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