

St Mary and St Peter's Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123741
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	359502
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Anna Sketchley

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Key
Headteacher	Karen Brooker
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed four teachers. Inspectors spoke informally to some parents and carers and analysed 31 questionnaires. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including pupils' work, systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress, plans for improvement and reports written by the local authority. Questionnaires completed by 19 pupils and 13 staff were also evaluated.

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

- The ability of leaders at all levels to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils and to model high expectations and provide challenge to sustain the improved attainment and progress of all pupils.
- The quality of teaching and the progress of strategies in teaching, learning and the curriculum to improve attainment. The progress of middle and higher ability pupils, particularly in mathematics.
- How well children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve.

Information about the school

St Mary and St Peter's is a smaller than average primary school. It changed from first school to primary status in 2009 but as yet there are no Year 6 pupils enrolled at the school. It is situated on two sites, each in separate villages, namely Ilton and Barrington, and these are some 4 miles apart. Each base includes pupils from across the primary age range with two mixed age classes, one of which is predominantly Reception and Year 1 and the other for Years 2, 3, 4 and 5, although currently there are very few Year 5 pupils. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average and comprises mainly pupils with moderate learning difficulties and speech, language and communication difficulties. All pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has achieved Healthy School Status and the Activemark award. At the Ilton base there is a privately run pre-school on site. It is currently proposed that the school will federate with another very small local primary school and this would take place in the New Year.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Mary and St Peter's is a good school. Due to skilled leaders and managers it has some outstanding features, and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The forthcoming federation with another small local school has enabled a strong leadership team to be put in place. The headteacher, staff and governing body share expertise and play a full part in the effective monitoring of the school's performance. Since the last inspection, rigorous tracking and monitoring procedures for pupils' progress have been introduced resulting in more accurate school self-evaluation. All of these developments indicate that the school has a good capacity for further sustained improvement. Despite significant disruption to staffing in recent years, the school has successfully addressed the issue of equal opportunities across the two bases. Children in both Reception classes experience a calm and well-organised environment, ensuring that they begin school with confidence; consequently, they make good progress and achieve well in all areas of learning.

Teaching is now consistently good throughout the school. The curriculum is stimulating and interesting, and tasks are challenging for all ability groups, including those with special needs and/or disabilities. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and one pupil stated, 'We are expected to do our best!' All of this has resulted in pupils making good progress and reaching above average attainment by the time they leave. While attainment in mathematics is above average overall, progress can be inconsistent. The school has recognised that the successful strategies they have used to improve writing could ensure more consistent progress in mathematics and raise attainment.

The care, guidance and support offered to every pupil and family is outstanding. Parents endorse this judgement, making such comments as: 'The benefits of a small school where every child is managed as an individual cannot be too strongly emphasised.' The Christian ethos and 'family feel' of the school underpin all its work. These features, together with excellent relationships and a calm atmosphere, ensure a very positive climate for learning.

In this an exceptionally safe and very cohesive school, there are impressive partnerships and links with the local communities and other countries. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of the diverse cultures that exist in the United Kingdom. The school is already addressing this issue, although plans are at an early stage of development.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress in mathematics by embedding similar strategies to those used to raise attainment and improve progress in writing, for example by:
 - ensuring that pupils are given more opportunities to discuss their ideas through talk
 - extending pupils' use of self-assessment in mathematics by referring more often to the success criteria for their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The very small number of pupils in each year group makes national comparisons difficult. Attainment is above average, although it is higher in reading and writing than in mathematics. School tracking shows that all pupils make good progress, and this is evident in lessons.

All pupils in a junior class were very well challenged when practising writing instructions for drawing a cartoon mouth. Pupils demonstrated, through the teacher's very effective application of a variety of strategies, that they could use time words and phrases correctly, combined with the use of imperatives. Tasks were exceptionally well matched to different ages and abilities. In a challenging mixed Reception and Year 1 lesson, pupils learned to recognise and name 2D shapes, including those with as many as eight sides. They were helped to make good progress as they strived to describe a shape whilst playing an exciting game using a 'feely bag'. The 'Forest Schools' lesson, involving the whole of one base from Reception to Year 5, was a joy to observe as three teams learned to discuss, co-operate and help one another 'cross the swamp' using hoops and collecting cones on the way - without falling in! All pupils showed real persistence with the task and were particularly good at including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities for whom the task was physically demanding. There are many examples of the good progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; these pupils are skilfully supported by teaching assistants but encouraged to be independent. Their contributions are welcomed and valued, as shown by the response of an adult to one very young pupil, who commented in assembly that the poppy being talked about was not real but a 'pretend' one. The comment was affirmed and enlarged upon.

Pupils demonstrate how much they enjoy school by their good attendance and behaviour and their involvement in all that the school offers. It is their common view that 'most lessons are fun'. They are polite both in class and around the school and have good attitudes to learning, and speak of the school as a 'happy family'. If there are any small problems, they feel confident that they can go to an adult who will always help them. Undertaking safety checks through the school council ensures that pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and as a result they feel very secure in school. Healthy School Status and the Activemark, and taking part in the daily 'Wake and Shake' exercise session, helps pupils to have a good understanding of how to live healthily. Pupils take a pride in performing small responsibilities around the school, making a significant contribution to its life and work. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because of the strong Christian ethos and impressive links with the local community. There are especially very well developed links with a local National Trust property and with

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a school in Kenya. Pupils organise activities to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves. The life skills learned through this, coupled with their good basic skills and opportunities through being a Forest School, are preparing them well for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

Teaching is consistently good, with some outstanding elements in both bases. Good subject knowledge and very carefully planned lessons ensure that tasks are matched well to the needs of all ages and abilities. Teachers are particularly good at ensuring pupils know exactly what they are to learn. Using success criteria during and at the end of lessons helps pupils assess how well they are doing. However, this is not as well developed in mathematics as in English. Individual targets and informative marking that shows them how to improve enable them to take more responsibility for their own learning. Imaginative use is made of information and communication technology and this captures pupils' interest and helps them to make good progress. They are consistently given the chance to explain their answers to teachers' probing questions, creating good speaking and listening opportunities. Occasionally some parts of the introduction to a lesson are too long and the pace slows so that pupils do not make progress as quickly as they might.

The strength of the curriculum lies in the determination of teachers to work from the pupils' own interests so that they are enthusiastic about learning. One parent commented,

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'I love their way of teaching around a theme and really accessing the whole curriculum.' Teachers are particularly good at identifying the skills involved in different areas across the curriculum, ensuring that these are built on through the chosen topics. Opportunities for practising literacy and numeracy skills are well represented. The principles of Forest School enhance the provision for personal and social skills. Enrichment of the curriculum is extensive for such a small school and pupils benefit from trips, visitors and many extra-curricular activities, especially sport and music. They show their appreciation by the high take-up of all that is on offer. Music is a particular strength.

Pupils are very well known to everyone. The school is extremely sensitive in the way that it cares for each individual. Parents show a very high degree of satisfaction with school safety. Pupils with challenging behaviour are very well managed. Vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are especially well cared for and provision is inclusive, well organised and effective. This is much appreciated by parents, many of whom remark upon the confidence that the school gives their children. The quality of the links with outside agencies, such as the Children's Centre and Parent Family Support Adviser, is outstanding, especially with those that help to provide the high level of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, new senior leadership team and governors are providing strong leadership. The proposed federation has developed an effective team dedicated to communicating a clear direction and vision for further improvement to the school communities involved. As a result, there is a real team spirit and commitment to excellence. The governing body offers good support, has worked hard to become well informed and has successfully challenged the issues that face these small schools. There is an impressive annual monitoring plan in place for all aspects of the school's work. The monitoring is undertaken by both staff and governors.

The promotion of community cohesion at school, within the local community and at a global level is strong, demonstrated by links with the churches in both communities and by projects such as their adopted school in Kenya, for whom the pupils have already raised money for furniture and a new extension to the building. Pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity that exists in the United Kingdom is less strong but the school has already made contact with a school in Birmingham that is very different from their own and visits are planned for the near future. The school has an excellent range of partnerships. Not only do these enhance outcomes for pupils, for example in sport, but

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they also enable the school to share some of its good practice, particularly in the leadership and management of small schools. The promoting of equality of opportunities for different groups of pupils is well managed through careful monitoring. It ensures that all pupils in both bases make good progress. Leaders do not tolerate any form of discrimination. The governing body and school staff ensure that safeguarding procedures are exemplary. Child protection procedures, including staff training and risk assessments, are extremely rigorous and are reviewed regularly to ensure all pupils are kept safe.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good induction procedures and continuing communication with parents ensure a settled start to school life for young children. They enter school with levels of knowledge and skills broadly similar to those expected nationally, although aspects of communication, language and literacy, and calculation skills for some children are below those expected. Examples of good and outstanding teaching and organisation, an appropriate curriculum and the correct balance between adult-led and child-chosen activities secure good development in all areas of learning. As a result, children reach the goals expected and sometimes exceed them by the end of the Reception Year. Thoughtful planning and selection of resources by the teacher for both outside and indoors provide children with opportunities to build on previous learning. For example, whilst choosing their own activities, children re-enforced their learning about shape from the day before by making patterns and filling shapes with rice. Relationships are warm and caring and the environment is safe and calm for young children. Personal and social development are strong in both settings. Adults interact well with children, joining in their play both outside and indoors, whilst asking questions and facilitating learning. Whatever they are engaged in, children's behaviour is good and they benefit from the role models of older pupils who already know the well-organised daily routines. Good assessment procedures, including

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observation notes and photographs, are used effectively to plan the next steps in learning for each child. As a result, children make good progress. Individual 'learning journey' profiles are a valuable record of this progress. Parents do not, as yet, contribute to these. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good; children are extremely well cared for and their welfare is paramount. Leaders ensure that teachers plan effectively together across both bases and this is securing equal opportunities for all children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are extremely supportive of the school. Some chose not to answer all of the questions, especially the one about leadership and management. Of the small number of concerns raised, most were about the high turnover of teaching staff in recent years and sometimes this was attributed to the way in which the school is led and managed. Inspectors found strong leadership. A small minority of parents indicated concerns about the progress their child was making and sometimes this also was attributed, in comments, to staff changes. Inspectors found that the progress pupils make has improved since the last inspection and is good. Two questionnaires indicated concerns about the way in which the school manages behaviour. However, during the course of the inspection, the behaviour seen was good and the school has effective strategies for managing inappropriate behaviour. Inspectors spoke personally to a few parents who had not completed the questionnaire and all were pleased with their child's progress and had no concerns about behaviour at school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary and St Peter's Church of England Primary 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 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 52 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	71	9	29	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	68	9	29	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	61	10	32	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	58	5	16	5	16	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	61	9	29	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	58	10	32	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	61	12	39	0	0	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)	16	52	13	42	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	55	12	39	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	55	12	39	0	0	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	48	12	39	4	13	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	39	11	35	4	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	16	52	13	42	1	3	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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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 pupils 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



10 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary and St Peter's Church of England Primary School, Ilminster TA19 9EX.

I should like to thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school recently and for spending time talking to us. We really enjoyed meeting you. St Mary and St Peter's is a good school. It has some outstanding features and you are doing well because of your hard work and the actions taken by your headteacher and other adults in your school. These are some of the best things we found.

- You really enjoy coming to school. Your attendance is good and you are polite and well behaved. This is helping you to do well.
- You have a very good understanding of how to stay safe, and a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle.
- You really enjoy helping each other in school and get on very well together.
- Your teachers teach you well and make learning fun. You have a good attitude to your work and find your learning interesting.
- You are exceptionally well cared for and you told us that you feel very happy and safe in school.
- Your headteacher and governors lead and manage the school well.

All the adults in your school want you to do your very best. Although they know what needs to be done next, we have asked them to do something to make your learning even better. We would like them to help you reach the same high standards in mathematics as you do in reading and writing. To do this, we would like them to give you more opportunities in mathematics lessons to talk your ideas through with a partner. We would also like them to make sure that you use success criteria to check your learning in mathematics as you do in writing lessons.

Please keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Anna Sketchley

Lead Inspector

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