

# Steep Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 116319            |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Hampshire         |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 357939            |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 8–9 February 2011 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | David Curtis      |

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>                      | Primary                                 |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary controlled                    |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11                                    |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                   |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 99                                      |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                      |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Eric Mackrell                           |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Louissa Romans                          |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 9 February 2011                         |
| <b>School address</b>                      | 95 Church Road<br>Hampshire<br>GU32 2DE |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 01730263988                             |
| <b>Fax number</b>                          | 01730 233738                            |
| <b>Email address</b>                       | office@steep.hants.sch.uk               |

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|--------------------------|-------------------|
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed ten lessons taught by four teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, the vice chair of the governing body, pupils and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, minutes of meetings held by the governing body, notes of visits made by the School Improvement Partner and documentation relating to safeguarding and child protection. Inspectors looked at the 62 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those returned by staff and pupils in Years 3 to 6.

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

- The reasons why in Years 1 and 2 attainment in mathematics is consistently lower than it is in reading and writing.
- In Years 3 to 6, the progress of pupils who are not on the school's register of special educational needs.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management in monitoring the progress of groups of pupils, especially by gender and the more able.

## Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average size primary school. Most pupils are White British. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children are taught in a single Reception class. In the rest of the school, there are three classes, all of which are mixed age for Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6. For mathematics in Years 1 and 2, pupils are taught as a Year 1 class and a Year 2 class. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average although, with very small year groups, the proportion can vary significantly within any single year group. Most of these particular pupils have specific learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The acting headteacher has been in post since 1 September 2010. A newly qualified teacher was appointed from 1 September 2010 to cover her class.

**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

This is a good school. Pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress so that by the end of Year 6, attainment in English and mathematics is above average. The gap in attainment between reading and writing, and mathematics at the end of Year 2 is closing rapidly as the result of very effective local authority support and the willingness of staff to undertake additional in-service training to increase confidence in teaching the subject. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because of very high-quality personalised learning programmes. These pupils receive excellent support from teachers and highly-skilled teaching assistants. On occasions, especially when pupils have to sit and listen for too long, the progress of more-able pupils slows because they mark time rather than extend their learning. When writing in other subjects, especially science and geography, pupils do not take sufficient care with their handwriting or with the spelling of key scientific or geographical vocabulary.

Attendance is high and reflects pupils' enjoyment of school and all that it offers, including a wide range of after-school clubs. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles. They feel totally safe in school and show an outstanding awareness of the dangers of substance misuse and 'Stranger Danger'. Behaviour is good. Pupils in Year 6 particularly enjoy their responsibilities as librarians. ♦ ♦

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and quickly adapt to the day-to-day life in school. They benefit, as do the rest of the pupils, from the staff knowing and supporting them as individuals. Throughout the school, relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace, with work matched closely to pupils' differing learning needs. Good use is made of new technology, including interactive whiteboards, to demonstrate new learning. Pupils understand and use their targets successfully to think about their own next steps in learning. In lessons, teachers do not always make it sufficiently clear as to the amount of work they expect pupils to do by the end of the lesson which, at times, slows pupils' work rates.

Self-evaluation is accurate and based on a detailed analysis of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. The acting headteacher and staff have a clear vision and understanding of where the school needs to go next, especially in developing the wonderful grounds as a more effective learning resource. Taking into consideration that the school has maintained the strengths identified in the last inspection report, and closed the gap in attainment at the end of Year 2, the school has good capacity for further improvement.

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

- By December 2011, improve the quality of teaching so that all lessons are at least good or better through:
  - reducing the amount of time teachers spend talking to pupils
  - providing consistent levels of challenge for more-able pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6
  - making sure pupils know what they are expected to achieve by the end of lessons.
- Improve pupils' use of writing in other subjects by:
  - focusing more rigorously on pupils' correct spelling of key vocabulary, especially in science and geography.
  - raising expectations of the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation skills

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

With small year groups, attainment on entry varies significantly from year to year. But, the recent trend indicates that children start school with a range of skills and knowledge that are below those expected for four-year-olds. In most lessons, pupils enjoy their learning and all groups make at least good progress. In a mathematics lesson in Year 2, pupils made good progress in calculating the cost of items for a birthday party, with the more able expected to extend their learning by doubling the amounts and then finding the change from £5.00. In Years 3 and 4, pupils made good progress in doubling numbers, including decimals. They worked exceptionally hard and enjoyed the extension activity in solving word problems that involved doubling. A number took great delight in telling the inspector, 'I met one of my targets in this lesson.'

Progress slows in a few lessons when pupils sit and listen for too long and although they are compliant, older and more-able pupils do not make sufficient progress because they have to listen to what they already know, understand and can do. In their writing in science and geography, pupils' spelling, for example, includes 'vapor' for 'vapour' and 'brizil' instead of 'Brazil' and reflects a lack of care in using and applying key skills. ♦

Although behaviour is good, there are occasions when concentration waivers, especially when sitting for too long or the work has not been explained sufficiently clearly. The school council plays an important role in the day-to-day life of the school, including writing letters to parents and carers about its work and ideas to improve the school. Pupils play an active role in the local community through supporting events at the church and by participating in local music festivals. They are prepared successfully both socially and academically for transfer to secondary school.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 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                      | 1        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>1</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 1        |
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>  | <b>2</b> |

<sup>1</sup> 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?

In the most effective lessons, teachers' planning is detailed and addresses closely the significant range of learning needs within a mixed-age class. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and the 'steps for success' are shared in relation to learning. Teaching assistants make a very strong contribution, especially at the start of lessons by supporting small groups of pupils through reinforcing the key teaching and learning points. Lesson introductions are brief and the focus is on pupils working independently or in small groups. However, through circulating around the class, and by gauging pupils' confidence in asking questions and seeking advice, teachers monitor closely the progress made. The pace of learning slows on a few occasions when teachers talk for too long and more-able pupils are not given the opportunity to work independently on more demanding and challenging tasks. Teachers' marking is good in English and mathematics. In the pupil questionnaires all of the pupils said that adults explain to them how they can improve their work. Regular assessments of pupils' learning ensure that intervention programmes are put in place to support potential underachievement. Pupils in Year 6 said how much they value these programmes.

Pupils in Year 6 spoke with great excitement about lessons where learning is practical, especially their current work on the Aztecs. They benefit from a good range of educational visits, visitors to the school and after-school clubs. Teachers ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement to the National Curriculum. The school has in its improvement plan a

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target to further enrich cross-curricular provision, with a much stronger focus on using outdoor learning.

The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who face challenging circumstances that may make them vulnerable is excellent. The school works very effectively with a wide range of outside agencies to support these pupils and their families. As a result, these pupils make outstanding progress. Currently, this high-quality and in-depth support is not extended fully to more-able pupils. Parents and carers are very appreciative of the quality of the induction programme for children joining the Reception class. ♦♦♦

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Since her appointment, the acting headteacher has worked effectively with her colleagues to maintain the school's strengths and to continue working with the local authority and partner schools to raise attainment even further in mathematics and writing. In such a small school, all staff have many leadership roles and they fulfil these effectively in monitoring teaching and learning both formally and informally. There is an excellent focus on the performance and progress of individual pupils which is extremely important in the context of a small school. However, there is not a sharp enough focus by the staff and the governing body on monitoring progress by gender and for those pupils not on the school's register of special educational needs. As a result, gaps for example between boys and girls may not be picked up quickly enough.

The governing body is very effective and supportive of the school. It pays rigorous attention to safeguarding and child protection. All pupils and the vast majority of parents and carers expressed no concerns about safety and well-being. The governing body takes its monitoring role seriously and through this has a detailed overview of the school's performance. There is no discrimination in the school and the school promotes equality of opportunity effectively.

Being a small rural primary school, the staff and governors are very aware of the importance of promoting community cohesion. The school is very much at the heart of its own community and good links are established with an urban school in Liverpool and a school in South Africa. The school is working towards achieving the 'Rights Respecting School' status.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress and by the time they start Year 1 their attainment is broadly average. Children enjoy school and show impressive levels of independence and self-confidence. For example, two children clearly knew how the interactive whiteboard should start up. However, when it decided not to, and with no prompting, they went next door to the Years 1 and 2 class to collect a laptop and mouse. On returning, they plugged the mouse in, logged-on to the school network and loaded the program they wanted. In the outdoor area, a group of boys spent a lengthy period of time using construction kits to make rockets and gave very detailed explanations to the inspector of where the lasers are located! Children enjoy working with adults and made good progress in writing captions for the posters advertising the 'Pet Shop'.

The teacher and the early years teaching assistant are a very strong team who plan very effectively so that work is matched very closely to children's individual development stage within the early learning goals. Imaginative and creative use of space within a school building dating from 1875 means that children have a good range of spaces both indoors and outdoors in which to learn effectively. Assessment is excellent and children's progress is recorded in great detail against each of the six areas of learning. Currently, parents and carers are not as fully engaged as they might be in contributing those 'WOW' moments at home to their children's 'Learning Journeys'.

Partnerships with pre-school providers are effective, including useful transition documentation as to children's prior learning and development. Staff work effectively with colleagues in the cluster to provide in-service training and support the accurate moderation of children's knowledge, skills and understanding at the end of Reception.




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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>                   | <b>2</b> |
| 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

Sixty-two per cent of questionnaires were returned which is a good proportion. Most parents and carers are very supportive of the school and its work. Parents and carers of children in Reception are very positive. For example one wrote, 'My daughter is progressing amazingly at this school and I could not be happier .my daughter is doing very well.' Another with two children in the school wrote, 'I cannot thank and credit the school and all of its staff enough for the help and support we receive as a family regarding our son and daughter. Thank you Steep CofE.' A few parents and carers expressed concerns about how well the school tackles unacceptable behaviour, and that their children do not make enough progress. Inspection findings show that behaviour is good and, during the inspection, saw no evidence of unacceptable behaviour. Inspection findings show that, in a few lessons, more-able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable, but generally progress is good.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Steep Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 99 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |   | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | % | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 48             | 77 | 13    | 21 | 1        | 2 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 48             | 77 | 13    | 21 | 1        | 2 | 0                 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress  | 36             | 58 | 22    | 35 | 2        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 33             | 53 | 22    | 35 | 5        | 8 | 0                 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 39             | 63 | 22    | 35 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 37             | 60 | 21    | 34 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 39             | 63 | 22    | 35 | 1        | 2 | 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) | 38             | 61 | 20    | 32 | 2        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 36             | 58 | 21    | 34 | 2        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 29             | 47 | 22    | 35 | 3        | 5 | 2                 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 38             | 61 | 19    | 31 | 2        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 43             | 69 | 17    | 27 | 2        | 3 | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 46             | 74 | 15    | 24 | 1        | 2 | 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      | 59  | 35   | 3            | 3          |
| Primary schools      | 9   | 44   | 39           | 7          |
| Secondary schools    | 13  | 36   | 41           | 11         |
| Sixth forms          | 15  | 39   | 43           | 3          |
| Special schools      | 35  | 43   | 17           | 5          |
| Pupil referral units | 21  | 42   | 29           | 9          |
| All schools          | 13  | 43   | 37           | 8          |

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 August 2010 and 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 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul> |
| 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 February 2011



Dear Pupils



**Inspection of Steep Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,  
Petersfield GU32 2DE**



I very much enjoyed my two days in your school and seeing you at work in your lessons. I must say a special thank you to those of you in Year 6 whom I met at lunchtime on the first day of the inspection. I am delighted to tell you that you go to a good school. These are some of the things that really stand out.

- You make a good start to your learning in Reception.
- By the end of Year 6 your attainment in English and mathematics is above average.
- You feel totally safe in school and have an excellent understanding of the importance of keeping fit and healthy.
- Staff know you as individuals and support you effectively.
- Most of your lessons are good so that you make good progress.
- Those who lead and manage your school work as a very strong team to help you enjoy all aspects of your day-to-day life in school.

Although yours is a good school, I have asked your teachers and the governing body to do the following in order to make it even better.

- Make sure that the teaching in all of your lessons is at least good.
- To improve your handwriting and spelling, especially in science and geography.

All of you can help by taking more care, especially with your spelling when writing in science and geography.

Yours sincerely



David Curtis

Lead inspector

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