

St Katharine's CE(VC) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126310
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	360044
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Patricia (Tricia) Davies

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	67
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Holland
Headteacher	Sharon Cross
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed six teachers during visits to eight lessons. Inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils, the Chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including safeguarding, attendance, monitoring and assessment information, governing body minutes, school improvement and curriculum planning and pupils' work. Inspectors also scrutinised 34 questionnaires received from parents and carers and others from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The extent to which pupils are challenged to do well, including the more able, particularly in writing and in mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- The impact of strategies to improve attendance.
- The degree to which subject leaders and the governing body are influential in monitoring and improving pupils' academic performance.
- The extent and effectiveness of arrangements for promoting pupils' awareness of different cultures and traditions in this country and abroad.

Information about the school

St Katharine's is much smaller than many other primary schools. There are three classes, and each contains pupils from more than one year group. The school is situated in a rural location and many pupils travel to the school from outside its catchment area. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, with a range of different needs. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Reception group at the start of the school year, where they are taught with pupils in Year 1. There were several changes to staffing during the last school year. New staff joined in September at the start of this term, including the current acting headteacher, who is appointed for this school 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Katharine's is a small, caring community, where pupils receive a satisfactory education. Good pastoral support ensures that pupils are well known individually and feel confident that they can always turn to an adult in school if they have any worries or concerns. The impact of such close attention to pupils' welfare and well-being is illustrated in:

- pupils' good behaviour, and their interest and attention in lessons
- their lively response to physical activity, and clear understanding of the healthy benefits of eating fruit and vegetables
- their recognition of the importance of personal safety, for example on the internet
- how quickly children in the Reception group settle in as they start their education.

Parents recognise and appreciate these qualities in the school's work, and their questionnaire returns agreed unanimously that their children enjoy school life.

Achievement is satisfactory, with pupils reaching broadly average levels of attainment. Staff, together with the governing body, have given much attention to lifting achievement further and their efforts were rewarded in last summer's national tests at Years 2 and 6, with more pupils gaining the higher Levels 3 and 5. The school is maintaining this focus with much determination because, although those improved results reflect accelerations in pupils' progress, these are not yet extensive enough to secure good overall progress. In particular, initiatives to raise the level of challenge have yet to become fully established and consistently effective. Work to improve the content of pupils' writing, for example, and to develop mathematical reasoning and explanation are only partially successful because opportunities to do both are not always used to the full during lessons. Marking and learning targets are also being used to raise expectations, but practices vary and are not always fully effective in ensuring that pupils know how to improve.

Parents expressed a good deal of concern in their responses to the inspection questionnaire about changes to staff during the course of last year, and particularly those to the school's leadership. Staffing has stabilised this term and the present team are enthusiastic and determined to move the school forward. Leadership responsibilities are sensibly apportioned and there is close teamwork. Teaching and learning are competently monitored and supported by senior leaders, aided by robust tracking of pupils' attainment and progress, which involves all staff members. This information has provided clear self-evaluation so that detailed plans for future development contain accurate priorities for improvement. Together with recent academic improvements, these factors show the school to be soundly placed for moving on in its development. Nevertheless, plans to extend monitoring activities more widely among staff with areas of responsibility and the governing body have yet to be fully implemented in order to ensure that improvements are wholly effective. The governing body gives committed support. It pays close attention

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to its formal responsibilities and, to this end, is taking steps to increase pupils' experience of traditions and cultures beyond their own.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the degree of challenge and demand made of pupils, in order to accelerate learning and progress, by:
 - making the most of opportunities in lessons to enrich pupils' vocabulary to enhance their writing, and to develop their mathematical reasoning and explanation
 - consistently providing feedback on how to improve the quality of pupils' writing in addition to comment on secretarial aspects, such as spelling and grammar
 - varying learning targets to meet the needs of pupils with different learning needs and abilities.
- Extend monitoring activity more widely so that the governing body and staff with leadership responsibilities check closely the impact of new initiatives on the quality of provision and pupils' achievement.
- Develop links with different communities in this country and elsewhere in the world, in order to enrich pupils' experience and understanding of cultures and traditions other than their own.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' readiness to listen carefully, share ideas with a partner and work steadily at their tasks make an important contribution to their satisfactory learning in lessons. These features were seen in nearly all lessons. Positive attitudes are also displayed in pupils' neat and tidy presentation in their workbooks and a pleasure in their achievements when they know they have done well. Pupils are invariably interested in their classwork and name a wide range of subjects among their favourites. Exciting activities, involving practical activities such as physical education or making sandwiches as a stimulus for writing instructions, generated much enthusiasm. The use of drama to capture the reality of evacuation during the Second World War produced high levels of cooperation among pupils during this inspection. However, attention sometimes slips away, so pupils do not hear important explanations, or noise levels increase. Such factors then reduce the pace of learning to a satisfactory level.

Attainment into the Reception group varies to some degree from year to year, especially given the small numbers in each group, but is broadly as expected overall. While there is some good progress in Reception and across the school, it is largely satisfactory, maintaining broadly average attainment at Year 6 in English and mathematics. Nevertheless, the rate of progress is gaining greater pace, such that targets for last year's national tests at Year 6 were exceeded. A focused short-term writing programme has already moved on some individual pupils swiftly, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Taken overall, however, the progress of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities reflects the same variations in progress of other pupils and is, therefore, also satisfactory.

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Pupils agree that they are kind to each other and report that any issues with behaviour are limited to some noise in the hall during lunch and the odd pull of a jumper. The combination of strengths in pupils' personal qualities, together with their satisfactory academic achievement, forms a sound preparation for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

The curriculum is enlivened by topics, which allow several subjects to come together, and enhanced by visits out, including trips into the nearby forest and local museums.

The opportunity to learn French is popular with pupils, and they enjoy their weekly swimming sessions. Extra-curricular activities are adequate, with clubs at lunchtime and after school, and more opportunities for sport planned for later in the term.

Teaching routinely accommodates the demands of more than one age group, mixing pupils appropriately according to the nature of the task or by ability. Rigorous assessment of pupils' achievement enables staff to pinpoint any slipping behind, while there are also clear signs in all lessons of strategies to inject greater challenge into teaching and tackle key areas of weakness identified in English and mathematics. For example, subject vocabulary for these subjects is promoted frequently, so that pupils use it with increasing confidence when speaking about their work. Mathematical activity is also often pitched well for the more able, keeping them focused and working carefully as they did during

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work on reflective symmetry, or enabling others to benefit from their accurate demonstrations of how to work out a complicated calculation. Attention to more sophisticated mathematical skills, such as estimation and problem-solving, is growing and proving to be gradually successful. However, too often, chances to demand a little more or explore ideas carefully are missed, for example to extend descriptive vocabulary earlier in the lesson, to allow pupils more chances to ask questions during dramatic role play, or to use practical resources to support mathematical understanding. While marking comments valuably on punctuation and grammar, sometimes feedback focuses almost exclusively on these formal aspects and too little on promoting liveliness and interest. Learning targets give staff and pupils helpful direction, but are sometimes not varied enough to meet the different needs of individual pupils.

Key features of the school's strong pastoral care are captured in parents' praise for the school's supportive and welcoming ethos and its strong sense of community. Personal and social education is strong, and the school is quick to celebrate everyday kindnesses, such as helping out a younger child. Work with pupils and parents, to improve punctuality and attendance, for instance, has had a marked impact in individual cases. All but a very few pupils have good attendance, and attendance overall is broadly average. There has been improvement in the last three years and the school now plans to monitor wider trends more closely in order to lift it further. Good liaison with external agencies provides additional expertise to the benefit of vulnerable pupils or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders are building steadily on work already initiated by the school in the course of the last school year. The local authority continues to provide valuable support, exemplifying the effectiveness of the school's strong partnerships with other agencies and institutions. The positive impact of earlier work on recent test results has spurred staff on, and new members of staff are tackling their responsibilities with much care and enthusiasm. Plans to widen the range and scope of monitoring across staff are ready to be implemented. Leaders and other staff are well aware that these activities are essential for improving the provision and outcomes for pupils, avoiding any possible discrimination and increasing equal opportunities for all beyond their current satisfactory level.

The governing body takes its responsibilities very seriously. Safeguarding arrangements are comprehensive, training is thorough and risk is assessed with care and common sense. Policies are conscientiously reviewed and updated. The governing body recognises clearly

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where it needs to improve its work and influence. It is aware, for instance, that it must increase its monitoring activity further and gain even greater first-hand information of the school's work. In addition, initiatives to extend community cohesion are in hand. This aspect of the school's work is strong within the school and locally, and the curriculum gives pupils a valuable understanding of other faiths. Now the school is introducing more opportunities to foster pupils' experience beyond the local area. These strategies include links in the making with a larger school in a more culturally diverse community in this country and establishing contacts in Africa.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led with commitment and care. Children joining the Reception group benefit from the same close attention to their welfare and personal development given to other year groups. As a result, there is a busy and happy atmosphere, with children sharing space and resources amicably, and lots of friendly chat. Their quiet and sensible entry to the classroom alongside their Year 1 classmates and their good listening skills show that expectations have been well established early on. They are enthusiastic about their work on letter sounds and are already starting to name commonly used letters and their sounds as a foundation for reading and writing.

Independent choices about activities are made sensibly, and children enjoy the chance to work with exciting resources, such as models of dinosaurs and different types of glitter to stick on to cards and pictures. Sometimes, however, noise levels rise, so children find it difficult to concentrate. For example, a few children were distracted from their number work in the classroom, and outside by the excited play of others close by. These factors prevent progress from being consistently good. In addition, children are not always given

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enough educational direction during activities they select for themselves. Consequently, sometimes they are not clear about what they are learning or why they doing an activity.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The return of questionnaires from parents represents about half the pupils attending the school, and the proportion returned is above average. Much of their response was positive, including an agreement from nearly all that the school keeps their children safe. There was, however, a range of views, with the highest level of concern about changes to staff and school leadership. Indeed, the school confirmed that some pupils had left the school for this reason. Other particular areas where some parents expressed disagreement were about the degree to which the school considered their suggestions and concerns, the extent of children's progress and the quality of teaching. Inspection evidence found that staffing has stabilised, and there was some comment from parents acknowledging this. The inspection also found that the involvement of parents is strong in terms of organising events, arranged, for example, by the school's parent/teacher association. Nevertheless, the school acknowledges that it has more to do to involve parents fully in the educational side of its work, and in consulting with parents about what it does. Inspection evidence found the quality of teaching and pupils' progress to be satisfactory, with signs of acceleration in progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Katharine's C of E (VC) 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 67 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	79	7	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	71	9	26	1	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	9	26	20	59	1	3	2	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	32	17	50	4	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	62	7	21	4	12	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	56	11	32	1	3	2	6
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	53	10	29	2	6	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)	10	29	21	62	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	56	12	35	3	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	41	18	53	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	44	12	35	3	9	2	6
The school is led and managed effectively	10	29	15	44	5	15	2	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	62	10	29	3	9	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.



8 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Katharine's C of E (VC) Primary School, Marlborough SN8 3BG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school and joined you during some of your lessons. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and finding out lots of things about your school. This letter is to tell you that your school is doing the job it should, so that you all make satisfactory progress in learning the things that you need to know. Your parents agree that you enjoy life at school and we could see that in your good behaviour and your interest in lessons.

Here are some other things we found out about your school:

- Staff take good care of you and, as a result, you feel safe at school and know you have someone to turn to if you have a problem.
- You name lots of different subjects that you enjoy and we liked seeing how much you enjoy practical things like drama, and making your own sandwiches!
- Staff keep a careful check on your progress so that they can give you extra help, with your writing, for example, if you fall behind.
- The staff and governors are very enthusiastic about making things even better for you than they are now.

These are the things your school has been asked to do to make it even better:

- Make the most of every chance to challenge you so that you do the very best you can during lessons, including always giving you advice and targets for learning that help you to know what to do next to improve your work.
- Make sure that the staff who look after different subjects check even more closely on what is happening in school so that they know whether improvements are helping you to make faster progress.
- Ensure you know more about different ways of life in this country and abroad.

We hope that you will continue to work hard and make the most of all your school has to offer.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Davies

Lead inspector

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