

# St Nicholas Church of England VC Primary School, Bromham

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126307
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	360042
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Lake

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>	90
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Wallis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Bacon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 June 2008
<b>School address</b>	The Leaze, Bromham Chippenham SN15 2EY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01380 850391
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons, seeing four teachers. Inspectors held meetings with representatives of the governing body, members of staff and pupils; they also spoke to a number of parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at the most recent school self-evaluation form; the school development plan; the governing body minutes; the school's assessments of pupils' attainment and progress; the records held on vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities; school policies; and reports from the School Improvement Partner. Inspectors analysed questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 37 parents and carers.

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

- The use of assessment information to set targets for pupils throughout the school, especially for more-able pupils in Year 2, to determine if they are sufficiently challenging.
- The impact of the school's strategies to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures.
- The impact of the changes to the curriculum upon attainment and progress especially in English.
- The impact of the partnership links upon the provision for Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

This is a small school serving mainly the surrounding area, although a few pupils come from neighbouring towns. It has decreased from four to three classes since the last inspection. The vast majority of pupils are White British, with only a few from other ethnic groups. Although the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average. These are mainly pupils with specific learning difficulties. Some have speech and language difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The percentage of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is well below average. An independent pre-school is situated on the school site but was not part of this inspection.

**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

The school provides a satisfactory education for pupils. It has been improving steadily since its last inspection. The school's undoubted strengths result from the good quality care, guidance and support that ensure pupils are kept safe and have a good understanding of how to stay safe. The procedures for safeguarding are good. Pupils clearly enjoy school because of the good quality of the curriculum and have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. Links with parents are strong. Behaviour is good and pupils' good personal development is exemplified by the strong contribution they make to the school and wider local community.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They make satisfactory progress throughout the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, and attain average standards at Year 6. Attainment in English is rising because well-targeted improvements to the curriculum have helped improve the quality of pupils' writing. Information on how well pupils are progressing is used appropriately to plan work that challenges most pupils satisfactorily, but there are some inconsistencies, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, some pupils have work that is too hard for them and others are not challenged enough. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the high-quality support from capable teaching assistants and good partnerships with external agencies.

The school has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. All areas for development have been correctly identified and incorporated into a comprehensive school improvement plan. At present, the effectiveness of this plan, although satisfactory, is limited because it is not sufficiently focused upon the few key priorities that are most important to improving pupils' achievement rapidly. The improved assessment procedures can be seen in the detailed records of the progress of individual pupils, but data are not yet analysed in a sophisticated enough manner. This limits opportunities for subject leaders and the governing body to have a clear overview of the performance of groups or cohorts. Improvement is evident in a number of other areas. The curriculum has improved, care, guidance and support are more effective, and strengths of the last inspection are maintained. As a consequence of this improving picture, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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

- By 31 December 2011, improve the way assessment information is used across the school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, to enable more consistently good progress by:
  - ensuring tasks set for pupils are matched closely to their identified needs

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- By 1 September 2011, refine the way in which data is analysed to:
  - provide a clearer picture of the progress made by groups and cohorts
  - ensure that data is easily accessible to all leaders, staff and governors.
- By 1 September 2011, simplify the school development plan and share it with all staff and governors by:
  - focusing on the few most important issues in priority order
  - providing clear criteria for success with a timeline for completion
  - identifying who will judge the achievement of the success criteria.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are keen to learn because the curriculum makes learning relevant to them. Children's skills on entry vary from year to year because of the small cohorts. Typically, they are in line with those expected at this age, although there is often a significant group whose early writing skills are much lower. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress to start Year 1 with average attainment, although writing skills often remain slightly below average. They make satisfactory progress through the rest of the school to attain average standards by the end of Year 6. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve challenging but realistic targets that would represent good progress. This reflects the steady improvement taking place, especially in writing, which has been a school focus. Nevertheless, in some lessons across the school, not enough attention is given to matching work closely to the differing abilities of pupils. Lower-attaining or younger pupils, especially in Year 2, are sometimes faced with work that is too difficult for them, while some more-able pupils are not challenged enough. ♦ This is improving, especially for the older pupils in Key Stage 2, where many lessons now engage pupils and enable them to learn well. In a mathematics lesson observed, teaching was modified for lower attaining pupils to enable them to understand how to use their knowledge of doubling and halving to support calculation. Older and more-able pupils were challenged to develop their own calculation strategies to solve complex problems involving decimal fractions. This enabled all pupils to learn effectively and make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support that enables them to make good progress against their challenging individual targets.

Pupils are polite, friendly and confident. They say there is no bullying in the school and they trust teachers and other adults to deal effectively with any that might occur. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and local community. They undertake a wide range of responsibilities such as school council representatives. Older pupils enjoy being 'Sports Leaders', helping on the playground taking responsibility for younger pupils and playground games equipment. Every morning, the Sports Leaders plan and run a 'Fit Nick' session in the school hall, where all pupils spend 10 to 15 minutes engaged in strenuous exercise to music. This makes an excellent contribution to pupils' healthy lifestyles. Other pupils showed their understanding of the local community in the well-argued letters sent to the local Member of Parliament concerning a potential new sand quarry in the area. The valuable personal skills gained through these activities, together with pupils' sound basic skills, including information and communication technology (ICT) skills, help prepare them

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satisfactorily for their future lives. Pupils have a curiosity about the world about them and show empathy for others. In a high-quality piece of writing on Windows, a visual poem, pupils demonstrated strong spiritual and social skills. They clearly know right from wrong and show respect for themselves and others. Pupils have a sound understanding of cultures in other parts of the world but the school has correctly identified that their understanding of cultures across Britain remains comparatively weaker.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</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?

The school's actions to improve provision are seen in the many motivating and stimulating lessons across the school, although this is not yet consistent, especially for the younger pupils. Strategies to improve writing across the curriculum are effective, which is why attainment in English is rising across the school. Pupils are engaged by the 'Big Write' theme and eager to contribute to stories resulting from this. In an English lesson observed, pupils working on a joint class story made good progress because the task was broken down into small steps matched to the needs of each group. The less able gained confidence from telling the story in pictures and icons and eagerly acted this out for the inspector. High-quality questioning from the teacher ensured that more-able pupils were challenged to find exciting words to open their sentences and pay very close attention to vocabulary and punctuation.

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Good use is made of the local environment to support learning and provide opportunities for writing. In one such recent event, pupils gained good opportunities to use key skills across the curriculum whilst learning about the Battle of Roundway Down. Partnerships with other local schools provide good opportunities for sport. Those pupils identified as gifted and talented are supported appropriately through links with the local authority and other local schools. The school is seeking to extend pupils' cultural development through links with other schools. Current links include a French school and the international mathematics games, 'Mathletics', where pupils compete with schools in countries as diverse as Australia and Algeria. These reflect the strenuous efforts the school is making in this area, but the school is finding greater difficulty developing links at a national level.

Pastoral care, especially for vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs, is a strength of the school. Child protection procedures are detailed, well known to all staff and made readily available for temporary staff through the high-quality staff handbook. Pupils' progress is suitably tracked and recorded to enable easy identification of where support is needed. The additional needs of those pupils deemed vulnerable are met well, and in some cases extremely well. ♦ Good support for parents and carers has enabled the improvement in attendance.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<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?

The strong leadership of the headteacher is developing in staff an ambition to improve that is now driving school improvement through a detailed school improvement plan. Nevertheless, the plan lacks precision in terms of realistic timescales for improvement, suitable success criteria and identification of who will judge these. Some teaching assistants, although sharing an ambition to improve, are not familiar with the plan and rightly wish to have more opportunity to support school improvement.

The school takes suitable steps to ensure equality of opportunity by monitoring the progress of every individual and takes satisfactory measures to prevent discrimination. The school ensures that vulnerable pupils or those with additional needs are fully included in all activities. Safeguarding is central to the work of the school. Regular training for staff and governors and close monitoring by the governing body ensures safeguarding requirements are met effectively. Governors support the school well. They have effective procedures and strategies for obtaining the views of parents and carers but are not rigorous enough in holding the school to account through use of data or by challenging the school improvement plan. The school has recently reviewed its provision for promoting

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community cohesion and identified the need to improve the strategies in place and evaluate their effectiveness in a more formal manner. Work on this has already started.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Strong links with parents, and the on-site pre-school, together with well-established routines, help children settle in quickly and get a secure start to their education. The welfare and needs of the children are met well through strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants. Children achieve satisfactorily overall but make good progress in early writing skills in line with the whole-school strategy to improve writing. The sound management of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures smooth systems and a well-organised and attractive environment. The curriculum is planned to provide simulating opportunities for children. Children particularly enjoy the 'Forest School' activities. Teachers and other adults usually ensure a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. Recent building improvements have enabled better access to the well-resourced outdoor area. Children make good use of this area and are given access to the same learning opportunities indoors and outdoors. Most whole-class activities are planned well and often enable more-able children to join in with Year 1 activities when they are ready, ensuring children are suitably prepared for learning when they start Year 1. Nevertheless, in line with the rest of the school, inconsistencies in the way assessment information is used to match tasks to the individual needs of children sometimes limit the pace of learning. Strong links with other schools to moderate assessments have ensured the accuracy of the systems for checking on children's progress.



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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>3</b>
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

Just over a third of the parents who returned questionnaires also made comments on the school. Typical of the positive comments was: 'I am extremely pleased with my child's progress. He loves going to school, which I feel is like a big family.' A few were concerned about the way in which behaviour is managed.

Inspectors agree with the positive comments of parents. Inspection evidence shows that behaviour is managed well, although there are a very few challenging pupils whose behaviour, although managed very well, could affect parental perceptions.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Nicholas Church of England 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 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 90 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	70	10	27	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	33	89	2	5	1	3	1	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	17	46	18	49	1	3	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	49	18	49	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	68	8	22	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	70	10	27	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	70	10	27	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)	22	59	13	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	57	14	38	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	30	20	54	2	5	3	8
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	38	21	57	1	3	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	21	57	14	38	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	68	8	22	3	8	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.**



22 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Nicholas Church of England VC Primary School, Chippenham  
SN15 2EY**

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to visit you. We enjoyed talking with you about your school. You behave well and look after each other like a family.

Yours is a satisfactory school that is improving due to the effective work of your teachers. You reach standards similar to those attained in most schools. Here are some of things that we liked about your school.

- You thoroughly enjoy learning because of the good quality of the curriculum.
- The school looks after you well and makes sure that you are safe and have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe.
- You have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. I particularly enjoyed the 'Fit Nick' sessions.
- You make a good contribution to your school and the local community. I was impressed by the letters to your Member of Parliament about the quarry.
- There are good links with your parents and with other schools and organisations that all help your learning

To help your school continue improving, we have asked the headteacher and governors to:

- ensure that teachers use the information they have on how well you learn to plan lessons that help all of you, including those of you in Reception, do as well as possible
- look at their plans for improving the school and focus on a few areas at a time
- improve the way they organise and analyse the information on your progress so that the teachers and governors can see easily how well the whole school and parts of it are doing.

You can help by telling your teachers how hard or easy you find the work set for you.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake Lead Inspector

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