

St Nicholas CofE Primary School, Henstridge

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123760
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	359510
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Laurie Lewin

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	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Norman Symcox
Headteacher	Alison Shearer
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten lessons were observed and four teachers were seen. The inspectors met with pupils, staff, parents and carers, and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation including teachers' planning, assessment information, safeguarding policies and scrutinised samples of pupils' work. The inspectors analysed 32 questionnaires from parents and carers, 14 from staff and 29 from pupils.

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

- How well do pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, more-able pupils and boys progress as they move through the school?
- What does the school's performance data show about pupils' progress this year?
- How successful are staff in providing pupils with sharply defined targets to help them progress?
- How much do pupils know about people from cultures different to their own?

Information about the school

The school is smaller than others of the same type. The number on roll has increased significantly in recent times. The school serves the local village and surrounding area. The overall proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and many of the individuals concerned have speech and language difficulties. The school provides support for a number of pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Nearly all of the pupils are White British, with a very small number coming from other ethnic heritages. Pupils in the school are taught currently in three classes. The school is accredited with several awards, including the Healthy Schools Award and the National Award for the Exceptional Delivery of Sport.

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. It has improved significantly since its last inspection. Particular improvements to pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching now ensure that all pupils make good progress.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with good teaching that ensures they achieve well. The good teaching and progress are also evident throughout the rest of the school so that, by the time pupils reach the end of Year 6, they attain the expected levels. All groups of pupils achieve well, including more-able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Relationships between all staff and the pupils are excellent. As a result, all pupils feel fully encouraged and supported. All pupils respond positively to the clear targets set to help them improve. Progress in reading is especially good, with pupils attaining above-average levels by the end of Year 6. While pupils' overall progress is good, it is weaker in writing than in other areas. The provision of a good, well-enriched curriculum ensures pupils enjoy their learning. As a result, attendance is above average. The school's 'Learning Garden' is an outstanding facility, beautifully designed, so that it enhances outdoor learning opportunities. Through work in the garden and other activities, pupils gain a very sensitive awareness and appreciation of the world around them. The much-improved behaviour of pupils is a major factor behind the school's establishment of good learning and progress in the classrooms. All pupils spoken to agreed with the one who said, 'The school is a much better place now we get lots of help and it's much easier to concentrate in lessons.'

Outstanding care, guidance and support provision ensures that all pupils feel safe and develop confidently. Pupils' good behaviour is reflected in the thoughtful, friendly and responsible attitudes they develop. Through the strong emphasis within the curriculum and the drive towards gaining the Healthy Schools Award and Award for the Exemplary Delivery of Sports, pupils have gained an excellent understanding about how to keep themselves fit and healthy. They have a clear awareness of right and wrong and a good sense of social awareness.

In her short time in post, the headteacher has created a climate in the school that ensures staff work together as a strong team. Together, they set ambitious targets for what the pupils should achieve. Through implementing robust and regular assessment procedures for English and mathematics, staff have a very clear overview of pupils' performance. They make good use of the information gained to improve the quality of teaching continually. Staff have focused their energies very successfully on improving pupils' progress in English and mathematics. However, their roles in leading and managing the foundation subjects are not fully defined so that improvement plans in some of these subject areas are not as clear as they could be. Nevertheless, rigorous and accurate self-evaluation means that all staff and the governing body have a clear view on the school's main strengths and

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weaknesses. The governing body involves itself strongly in all aspects of the school's work. Actions for strategic development are well prioritised and identified clearly in the school development plan. The strong commitment of the staff and the good rate of improvement since the last inspection mean that the school has demonstrated good capacity to improve. Given the current achievement of pupils, it provides good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' writing by July 2012 by ensuring that pupils:
 - learn to use a wide range of vocabulary in their written work
 - have a wide range of opportunities to work independently and to produce extended pieces of written work.
- Develop the roles of foundation subject leaders by July 2012 through clearly defining their roles and responsibilities, particularly in respect of producing detailed action plans for the future development of the subject areas for which they are responsible.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children's skills are below the expected levels when they start school. They progress well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This good progress continues across the school for all groups of pupils, including the more-able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Boys and girls progress equally well in lessons. Pupils work well to develop secure basic skills to help them progress in the future. For example, in a lesson for Years 2, 3 and 4, pupils learned to use similes, alliteration and adjectives effectively to enhance the quality of their writing. Similarly, in a lesson for Years 5 and 6, pupils of all abilities worked well to investigate symmetrical shapes and produce accurate mirror images of two-dimensional shapes. Pupils do particularly well in reading and many show a fluent approach to reading texts provided in lessons and good understanding of the content. However, pupils' progress and attainment in writing is not always as good as in reading and mathematics. The range of vocabulary used is occasionally rather limited and they do not always produce writing of sufficient length when asked to do so independently. Almost all pupils concentrate hard and try their best in lessons. They are usually keen to articulate their ideas. Pupils take pride in their work with good-quality presentation evident in their books. They respond well and are motivated by the awards for their good work and efforts during assembly. All groups of pupils show a deeply ingrained knowledge about how to maintain their health and fitness and they are very enthusiastic about participating in sports. They eat healthy foods at lunchtimes and breaktimes. Pupils feel safe and have no qualms about seeking help or advice from adults. Many comment that school is a happy and friendly place to be. They carry out conscientiously the responsibilities given to them. Activities such as fund raising for charities, their work in leading services in the local church and their involvement in local craft shows and village fetes are just a few examples of the pupils making a strong contribution to the local community. Pupils gain a sound knowledge of people from cultures different to their own through their detailed studies of different countries and links established, for example, with a school in Zambia. However, the understanding gained through direct engagement with people from different cultures is not as extensive as it needs to be.

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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	3
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	3
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?

Teachers make good use of information from assessing pupils' progress to plan lessons in which activities match pupils' needs precisely. As a result, pupils of all ability groups are challenged well by the work provided. Group work is enhanced strongly by the good work of the teaching assistants. For example, some particularly good work was seen when a teaching assistant trained pupils in recorder work. Another example was seen when two teaching assistants worked very effectively with Early Years Foundation Stage children in the 'Learning Garden'. Teaching assistants work well also in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that the individuals concerned become confident learners. Teachers show good subject knowledge so that explanations are always clear. They make good use of resources such as the interactive whiteboards to enliven their presentations. Classroom wall displays are used very well both to celebrate good examples of pupils' work and provide useful information to support pupils' learning. Very occasionally, pupils do not have enough opportunity to complete extended pieces of written work independently and not enough emphasis is placed on widening the range of vocabulary used in producing written work.

The curriculum is designed well to provide a good range of practical activities to broaden pupils' understanding and enable them to 'learn by doing'. A good range of extra activities, trips and visitors to the school also strongly enhances the learning opportunities. Personal, social and health education work is well established and provides strong support for pupils'

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personal development. Good links with other schools and good use of sports coaches are strong features of the ways the school boosts pupils' participation in sports activities.

Staff know all the pupils very well and cater sensitively for their needs. They are vigilant in all matters of safeguarding. There are many examples of pupils being helped to overcome difficult social and emotional needs. The excellent support for these pupils and, where necessary, their parents and carers has enabled the individuals concerned to become happy and confident class members who get their learning back on track successfully. This very strong provision is the basis upon which the school has been so effective in improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. It has enabled teachers to establish calm, purposeful and happy atmospheres in their classrooms.

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 school has established robust procedures for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of its performance and good procedures to track pupils' progress. Through this means, staff and the governing body have a good overview of strengths and weaknesses. On this basis, they have established a good range of initiatives to improve the quality of provision and pupils' progress. Recent results and the tracking information show that they have been successful in improving the achievement of all pupils. The good use of training through working closely with external partner organisations has been an important factor in boosting the skills of the staff and the governing body. The strong teamwork and commitment of staff have also been significant factors in enabling improvement. The headteacher has worked closely with the staff and governing body in promoting good relationships with parents and carers and involving them in supporting their children's learning. The weekly celebration assembly is a good example of this, with pupils, staff, parents, carers and governors joining together in a very happy celebration of pupils' achievements across the week. Staff carry out their roles as subject leaders for English and mathematics well. Also, good work has been done in developing the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, the lack of clear definition of staff roles in leading and managing the foundation subjects has meant that action plans for improving these subjects are not as clear as they should be.

The governing body works well to support the headteacher and staff, as well as providing the right level of challenge to ensure that measures adopted are the right ones to help the school become increasingly successful. Safeguarding processes are well embedded within the curriculum so that pupils gain a good understanding about how to keep themselves

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safe. Good emphasis is laid on ensuring that all policies, such as those to do with child protection, are up to date and implemented fully. Procedures for assessing risks are strong, with follow-up actions applied swiftly where required. The school works well to ensure that an extensive range of opportunities is open to all individuals and that no discrimination occurs.

The school has strong links with other local schools and a range of partner organisations and uses these well to boost pupils' learning. Community cohesion is well promoted, with a wide range of activities planned to put the school's work at the heart of the local community and to link it with a good range of organisations further afield.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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 processes ensure that children settle quickly when they start school. Good teaching ensures they progress well and achieve average attainment by the time they start Year 1. Children behave well and develop a confident approach to working together. There is much enjoyment evident in all that they do. For example, during a session seen when they worked on creative and play activities, children socialised happily with much lively conversation and good-quality interaction between them. Staff create a welcoming and purposeful atmosphere so that all children become happy learners who listen attentively and concentrate well. The curriculum is designed well to provide a rich range of practical activities. Staff set up a good range of activities both indoors and outdoors, with excellent use made of the school's 'Learning Garden' to promote the children's appreciation of nature. However, very occasionally, too much emphasis is placed on activities being led by an adult so that children do not have enough opportunities to investigate and explore activities independently. The good teaching ensures that children build up their basic skills rapidly. For example, they gain a secure grasp of letter sounds

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and number work. The teacher and the teaching assistants work together as a very efficient team and make excellent provision for helping children develop their language skills so that most individuals become confident in talking fluently about their ideas. The provision in this part of the school is well led and managed, with accurate self-evaluation established along with good-quality plans to maintain improvement. The care, support and guidance of all individuals are outstanding so that children feel valued and encouraged and completely safe at all times. Staff know the children very well and cater sensitively for their individual needs. Good systems are in place to track the progress of all children. The information gained is used very well to ensure strong support for all individuals, 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

There was a high return of questionnaires. Parents and carers are pleased with the school's work and particularly with the way that it has improved in recent times. Positive comments included, 'I cannot fault this school ♦ my child has progressed a lot faster than at the previous school attended' and 'The teachers and staff are fantastic and we are extremely proud of the progress made by our child'. These views were typical of many others received. Very few parents and carers had any critical views about the school and these views were not supported by inspection findings.

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 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 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 62 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	69	10	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	26	81	6	19	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	66	10	31	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	78	6	19	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	84	5	16	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	81	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	75	8	25	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	50	14	44	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	23	72	9	28	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	69	9	28	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	63	12	38	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	81	6	19	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	88	4	13	0	0	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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).

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"> ■ 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.



28 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Nicholas Church of England Primary School, Templecombe BA8 0QD

Thank you for making us feel welcome at your school. We have judged that yours is a good school. Through discussions we had with you and the survey that some of you completed, we know that there are many things that you like about your school.

Here are some of the good things that we found in your school.

- You make a good start to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- We can see that you enjoy school and the good curriculum makes sure you get lots of interesting activities to take part in.
- You are very fit and healthy and know a lot about how to stay this way.
- You to make good progress because of good teaching and your teachers work very hard to make your lessons interesting and fun.
- Your behaviour is good. You are thoughtful and good at helping others.
- You all have a good understanding about how to stay safe. The adults in the school do an outstanding job of taking care of you.
- The headteacher, staff and governing body have done a good job in helping the school improve. They work very hard to make sure it keeps improving.

This is what we have asked the school to do now:

- help you to improve your writing by using a wider range of interesting words and having more chances to produce pieces of extended writing independently
- help teachers in charge of subjects such as history, geography, music, design and technology, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education to develop their skills in managing these areas.

You can play an important part in helping the school to improve by continuing to work hard in all lessons.

Yours sincerely

Laurie Lewin

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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