

St Sampson's Church of England Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126317
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	360046
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Lankester
Headteacher	Jennifer Bayne
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2008
School address	Bath Road Cricklade, Swindon Swindon SN6 6AX
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and observed eight teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. The inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and at break times. They observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including development planning, monitoring information and evidence of safeguarding procedures, and pupils' books. They analysed 101 responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaire and took account of the views expressed by parents and carers during informal meetings and conversations.

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

- The school's information about the progress and learning of different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How well work challenges different groups of pupils and the effectiveness of intervention strategies for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The quality of provision to promote pupils' application of skills across the curriculum especially in writing and mathematics.
- How well leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses, leading to sustained action and improvement.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average size school, serving the local town and rural community. There are seven classes: two Year 3 classes, three classes with a mixture of Year 4 and Year 5 pupils and two Year 6 classes. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are a small number of Traveller pupils. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average and their main needs are basic literacy and numeracy skills. The headteacher took up the permanent appointment in September 2010. The school has the Green Flag eco award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Sampson's is a good school, where pupils' attainment is above average and their progress is good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning, because adults plan well to meet their different needs and they are provided with just the right level of support. Strong leadership ensures that the school is on a path of continuous improvement based on accurate evaluation of strengths and weaknesses. Pupils' progress in writing is particularly strong. However, overall learning and progress is faster in the upper half of the school because this is where teaching is the strongest. The care and support of pupils is placed at the heart of decision making. Staff know pupils well as individuals and make special arrangements to enable pupils to be included as much as possible in activities to support and enhance learning and enjoyment. Pupils have a good understanding about keeping themselves safe and are entirely confident that any concerns they might have will be dealt with fully and promptly. Pupils' behaviour in school is often exemplary and they are very courteous and polite. They have good attitudes to learning in lessons, although a few pupils sometimes find it difficult to maintain their concentration. Pupils make a substantial contribution to the school and local community. Nearly all take part in additional clubs and activities and their involvement in local events is highly valued. They are keenly involved, for example, in eco-work through recycling and saving energy. They are reflective about current issues and are developing a strong awareness about how they can help tackle concerns such as climate change.

The quality of teaching in the great majority of lessons is at least good. Good quality questioning and the use of 'talk partners' help pupils to develop their ideas and take an active role in their learning. However, learning slows, for example, when expectations about what can be achieved in the time available are not high enough. Pupils often use targets well to improve learning. There is excellent practice, for example in Year 6, where pupils use them to help to improve their work, and to set personal goals. However, the use of targets for self-assessment is less well established in the lower half of the school. The school's good curriculum provides the pupils with some memorable experiences. There are good opportunities for the pupils to apply their writing and mathematics skills in different subjects and use information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning.

Leaders have improved the quality of provision since the school was last inspected. Teaching is regularly monitored and evaluated, with areas of weakness followed up to improve practice. However, leaders rightly recognise that there is more to be done to raise the quality of teaching to the best in the school through more regular sharing of expertise. A culture of improvement is firmly established and the school is demonstrating a good capacity for sustained improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Iron out inconsistencies in progress by:
 - ensuring that expectations about what can be achieved in the time available are high across the school
 - improving opportunities for staff to share in existing best practice within the school.
- Involve pupils more in the target-setting process to promote more independent learning in the lower half of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' progress from their broadly average starting points in school is good and improving. Inspectors observed good learning in all year groups. Pupils from the Traveller community and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn as well as other pupils. Samples of pupils' work seen and information from the school's tracking of pupils' progress confirmed this picture. The current Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are working above age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. There are also strengths, for example in the creative arts, music composition, singing and physical education.

During the inspection, learning was good or better in approximately four fifths of lessons observed. Pupils in Year 6 made excellent progress in evaluating the use of sentences in a text and then working together to improve them. In history, in Years 4 and 5, the pupils learned a great deal about punishment in Tudor times compared with today. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 also used basic skills well to solve problems using inverse operations, and in Year 3, pupils consolidated their understanding about coordinates well. While this picture of good learning is typical, in a few lessons learning slows, for example when time is 'lost' because it takes too long to move from one activity to another.

Pupils' behaviour makes a strong contribution to their learning. Older pupils in Year 6, for example, show exemplary attitudes and quickly respond to teachers' high expectations to apply themselves diligently to writing activities. However, this is not always the case as a few younger boys are reluctant to work independently and produce as much as they can. Pupils are very aware of the possible dangers of using the internet. They have good awareness of keeping themselves safe, for example when coming to school. They say they are always listened to by the adults. Their participation levels in additional sporting activities are high and they know the importance of eating healthily. They greatly enjoy the many opportunities they have to help out in school, for example as playground leaders, house captains and library helpers. The eco-squad actively promotes caring for the environment and has helped to encourage the saving of energy in 'climate week' and 'Earth Hour time' and, promote health awareness through the 'Big Pedal' and by helping with the school's plastic-bottle greenhouse. They are proud of the schools' eco-award. In addition to this, the pupils welcome adults from the local area into school, host a community tea party, and are involved with the work of the 'Cricklade Bloomers'.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Pupils' enthusiasm and positive attitudes strongly support their learning because they enjoy the activities and challenges presented. Planning for different abilities is typically good and matches the needs of the different pupils. In a few lessons, learning moves on at a very sharp pace and the enjoyment and engagement of the pupils is high. However, this is not always the case, and on some occasions ideas do not move on quickly enough. Teachers use discussion and questioning well to promote better understanding. When pupils are asked to talk with each other, there is a buzz of activity. All pupils have targets to help them to learn better. Their use is highly effective, for example when the pupils use them to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their own writing, but this is not as well developed in all classes, particularly in the lower part of the school. Teaching assistants are skilled at asking the right questions and prompting to ensure that those with special educational needs and/or disabilities learn as well as other pupils. ♦♦

The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' learning and enjoyment. Themes such as 'Ancient Egypt' and 'The Tudors' provide good opportunities for them to consolidate and extend their literacy and computer skills, although the application of basic skills is not yet fully embedded across the curriculum. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 were fascinated, for example, as they used the internet to research crime and punishment in Tudor times. Flexible approaches to curriculum planning mean that staff are quick to respond to pupils' emerging needs. Strengths in art are evident in the vibrant art work on display, and in

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music, when Years 4 and 5 pupils performed their musical composition. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sporting activities and this contributes well to their knowledge of how to lead a healthy life. Assemblies are memorable occasions with strong messages about perseverance, time for reflection and prayer.

Leaders are very aware of those pupils who may be vulnerable because of their circumstances. They follow up any concerns quickly and ensure that action taken is very well targeted to support individual children. ♦ This includes ensuring that pupils come to school regularly, on time and ready to learn. Pupils are confident in expressing their views openly because they know their views will be valued and respected. The school has forged a strong partnership with the infant school to exchange information about pupils' academic progress and any individual needs. Special arrangements are in place to ensure that the pupils are helped as much as possible to make a successful transfer to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, with good support from other leaders, has tackled weaknesses with determination, including those identified in the previous inspection report. Plans for further improvement address the right priorities. The school has been successful in introducing and sustaining improvements to teaching. However, leaders recognise that more is yet to be done to share the excellent practice that exists in the school.

The school's strategy to improve writing is having a marked impact across the school.

The school is a very cohesive community, with different groups getting on well together. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of global similarities and differences are developed securely through well-established links with schools in India and France. The school is beginning to strengthen engagement with different cultures and communities through links with a more culturally diverse school within the United Kingdom. The work on global awareness ensures that stereotypical views are not promoted. The school carefully tracks the progress of different groups in order to identify any anomalies and action is taken to ensure that any gaps in performance are reduced. Provision to secure equal opportunities and tackle discrimination for all pupils is good.

The governing body is actively engaged in the work of the school and involved in strategic planning. It holds leaders to account well through asking insightful questions and challenging them, for example, about how changes made are making a difference to pupils' progress. The school offers a very safe, caring and secure working environment.

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There is a good understanding of safeguarding issues among governing body and staff. All requirements with regard to child protection are met. Parents and carers contribute well to school developments.

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

Views of parents and carers

The responses to the questionnaire reflect the school's very positive relationship with most groups of parents and carers. A good number of questionnaire responses were received by inspectors and about a third included comments. A broadly equal number of positive and negative views were expressed. The positive comments include reference to recent improvements in literacy, and to the support provided for individual pupils. A number of parents and carers also comment that the headteacher and staff are very approachable and helpful. Those comments which are not as supportive include views that the most able pupils are not extended as much as possible, and note inconsistencies in teaching. Lessons observed by inspectors showed an improved picture of teaching from the time of the previous inspection report, with a good level of challenge being provided for different groups of pupils including those who are more able.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Sampson's Church of England Junior 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 101 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 194 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	54	42	42	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	53	47	47	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	28	28	63	62	7	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	26	63	62	8	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	36	36	53	52	5	5	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	37	56	55	8	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	50	48	48	3	3	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)	45	45	49	49	2	2	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	31	61	60	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	28	56	55	7	7	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	38	49	49	8	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	48	48	44	44	4	4	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	49	46	46	4	4	1	1

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).

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.



31 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Sampsons Church of England Junior School, Cricklade SN6 6AX

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for talking to us so confidently about your work. You were very polite and friendly. You go to a good school, and you are exceptionally well cared for because the adults know you as individuals. Here are some of the things we particularly liked about your school.

- You make good progress because teachers give you activities which help you to learn well.
- Those of you with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the extra help that you get.
- You have a good understanding about how to keep safe and be active and healthy.
- You behave well and concentrate on your work in lessons.
- You make a substantial contribution to the school and the local community, for example through your involvement in eco-work. ♦
- You have activities which are often memorable and exciting to do.
- Your headteacher and other leaders have worked hard to improve teaching, and this is helping you to learn better. ♦

To help you make even faster progress, we have asked your teachers to ensure that the time available in lessons is always used to help you learn as much as possible and that the teachers work even more closely together to learn from each other. In addition to this, we have also asked the school to improve how you use targets to help you to learn and set yourselves goals. In some classes you are given a great deal of support to do this well but in other classes this is not as good. ♦

You can all help your teachers by always trying your best. ♦

Yours sincerely

Peter Clifton

Lead inspector

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