

# St Botolph's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118856
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	379693
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	George Logan

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Father Lawrence Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharon Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Dover Road Northfleet Gravesend DA11 9PL
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<b>Email address</b>	headteacher@st-botolphs.kent.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	22–23 September 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 13 lessons taught by eight different members of staff. Inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor, and with staff and pupils. They looked at pupils' books, records of their progress, teachers' lesson planning, playtime activities and the school's documentation, which included records of teaching and the main improvement plan. Responses to inspection questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and by 78 parents and carers were also considered.

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

- The accuracy of the school's evaluation of pupils' starting points, the consistency of progress which pupils make and the current levels of attainment of pupils in Years 2 and 6.
- The extent to which staff use assessment information effectively to plan challenging work to enable all pupils, particularly those identified as able or gifted, to make good progress.
- The effectiveness of senior leaders and managers, the governing body and subject leaders in developing the school's capacity to make improvements.

## Information about the school

St Botolph's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is of similar size to the majority of primary schools. The school serves a mainly White British community with a significant minority of pupils from other ethnic groups. Most children who enter the Reception class have attended various pre-schools locally. Only a few pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties. A below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The headteacher joined the school in September 2009.

**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

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils' progress overall is satisfactory. The main reason for this is that lessons do not always provide sufficient challenge, particularly for more able pupils. The school's commitment to pupils' personal development and their pastoral support is a significant strength and parents and carers appreciate the school's contribution to their children's well-being. Attendance is above average. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and behaviour is good. They feel outstandingly safe and have confidence in adults to deal with their concerns. They have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles and enjoy participating in physical activities. Pupils' contribution to the school in undertaking daily tasks and their involvement with the local community and organisations are generally good.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. While children's progress is satisfactory overall, staff do not always take enough account of available assessment information to ensure that planned activities provide sufficient challenge for the range of children's learning needs. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' learning, progress and achievement are satisfactory. Outcomes in reading and writing in 2011 were higher than in mathematics. In the last school year, most Stage 2 pupils made at least satisfactory progress, with some making good progress. However, more-able Year 6 pupils had made less rapid progress, particularly in writing, than those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For the latter, progress is mostly good, as a result of focused leadership and the effective input of well-prepared teaching assistants, several of whom have specific training.

Assessment practice, particularly the quality of marking and the use of individual targets for learning, has been a major focus, but improvements are not consistently embedded in day-to-day practice. The establishment of reviews of pupils' progress has enabled staff to engage in rigorous review of performance data. Pupils are gaining confidence in evaluating the quality of their own work. Overall, the curriculum motivates pupils satisfactorily, with some cross-curricular use of literacy and numeracy skills. Provision for music is a particular strength, while extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities are good.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has made significant progress in implementing a range of necessary changes. Several issues around staffing and finance have been successfully resolved. Improved identification of and more focused provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have contributed to the more rapid progress of these pupils. However, the

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monitoring of teaching and learning is over-dependent on the headteacher and is not consistently rigorous enough to ensure more rapid improvement in academic outcomes. The school development plan has generally appropriate priorities and actions but does not focus sufficiently on measurable targets. The good support of parents and carers, good progress in some classes, and a viable plan to improve assessment and increase pupils' progress further, together with the commitment of staff and the governing body, all indicate that the school has satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to increase the rate of progress made by all pupils, particularly the more able, so that attainment is higher by the end of Year 6, by:
  - ensuring that lessons have greater pace and challenge and that staff have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - more consistent and effective use of assessment strategies to evaluate and plan for the next steps in pupils' learning and to guide pupils in moving their learning on
  - ensuring more effective analysis of data in the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that planned activities provide appropriate levels of challenge for all children.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership by:
  - ensuring more rigorous monitoring of teaching to ensure a greater focus on pupils' learning and progress
  - ensuring greater involvement by middle managers and subject leaders in the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' learning
  - ensuring that school development planning identifies clear priorities and concise targets, against which progress can be measured.

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

Most children enter Reception with skills and experience in line with, and sometimes higher than those typical for their age. Learning is most rapid for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities because of the effective individual support they receive and the rigorous monitoring of its impact.

Attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is broadly average. In some lessons, good progress is underpinned by lively teaching. This was evident in a Year 4 physical education lesson where the teacher's technical knowledge was good and the pace engaged pupils' enthusiasm well. Older pupils made generally good progress in

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a mathematics lesson on factor pairs because there was a mostly appropriate range of activities which provided challenge for most groups. In other lessons in Years 3 to 6, progress was constrained because activities were not sufficiently advanced for the more-able pupils, so that they were repeating activities which they could cope with easily. This limits pupils' independence and development. In general, the presentation of pupils' written work lacks rigour and embedded quality.

Personal development outcomes are a strength. Pupils demonstrate mature attitudes in most lessons and treat each other, and visitors, with considerable courtesy. The school council gives pupils a good awareness of the democratic process. Good social skills and average basic skills ensure that pupils are satisfactorily prepared for later life. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils appreciate the challenges of living in other very different societies, reinforced by the annual residential visit to France and actively-developed links with a French primary school.

*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>1</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>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons are calm and well managed. Relationships are good, pupils are keen to learn and classrooms mostly provide a stimulating learning environment. As a result, most pupils make steady progress in their learning. However, given pupils' very positive attitudes, teachers' expectations, particularly of able pupils, are sometimes not high enough and this constrains pupils' progress. Planning, while generally thorough, does not consistently identify work which will really challenge the most able pupils.

<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

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Teachers have been responsive to the need for consistent assessment practice and this is, in general, an improving picture. However, individual learning targets are evident in some classes but not in others. Although pupils' work is always marked, teachers only occasionally give guidance as to next steps in learning. While most teachers use sound questioning techniques to extend learning in lessons, their expectations of the quality of pupils' written work are not always high enough.

The curriculum offers a satisfactory range of learning experiences. Some review of the curriculum has been carried out. The introduction of topics is beginning to promote cross-curricular skills satisfactorily, although there are still missed opportunities to extend the use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills across other subjects. There are good opportunities for music, sport and physical development. Pupils have very good opportunities to participate in choral singing or to play a range of musical instruments. The curriculum is generally well adapted for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Skilled support staff work effectively with individuals and groups, so ensuring that they often make good progress. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is carefully planned. External partnerships contribute satisfactorily to extending pupils' learning. A good range of special events, visits, enrichment activities and good extra-curricular provision make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and enjoyment. Pupils with particular ability in sport and music are well catered for in this respect.

Transition arrangements are well planned, particularly in supporting pupils identified as potentially vulnerable. The school works effectively with support agencies. There is well-established good practice, evident in several case studies, in supporting the health, social and behavioural needs of pupils in challenging circumstances.

*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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has resolutely tackled a range of challenging issues, while maintaining the school's positive ethos and underlying strengths, particularly in relation to pupils' good personal development. The school now has a clear direction and most staff are firmly committed to the headteacher's vision. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly. Meetings to review pupils' progress ensure that staff are held more closely accountable. However, lesson monitoring sometimes lacks

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rigour when insufficient account is taken of learning outcomes. While subject leaders have been empowered to monitor and lead their subject, they are not sufficiently rigorous in evaluating the quality of pupils' work and progress. However, the coordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is generally effective. Careful planning of appropriate provision and regular reviews ensure that these pupils make good progress. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved, but the more able pupils are not attaining their full potential.

The governing body is relatively new, but its members now have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. While they have not, until recently, been proactive in holding the school to account, a thorough monitoring programme for the current year is in place. Governors are well aware of their statutory responsibilities and are proactive in carrying them out. The governing body closely monitors all aspects of health and safety and safeguarding procedures are good. The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities but is not sufficiently focused on learning outcomes against which success might be judged.

The school has significantly improved its links with parents and carers. Links and partnerships with agencies ensure good support for pupils who have specific needs. Community cohesion is good. Pupils' understanding of diverse faiths and lifestyles is promoted well through the curriculum. While the school continues to seek better engagement with the local community, good national and international links, such as those with a French school, have a positive impact upon pupils' understanding.

*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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**



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Well-planned induction arrangements, including good links with pre-school settings, contribute to an effective partnership with parents and carers and ensure that children feel safe. Children's welfare is a priority and they receive sensitive, caring support. Although still new to school at the time of the inspection, children understood daily routines, behaved well and had already established good relationships with adults and with other children.

Provision is sound, overall. Most children enter Reception at levels in line with those expected for their ages, with some capable of working at higher levels. Satisfactory teaching supports sound progress. Although outcomes in 2010/11 across some areas of learning were slightly above those expected on entry to Year 1, attainment in reading, writing and calculation was around the national average. In general, teaching is not always sufficiently challenging to support more rapid and consistent progress and higher outcomes. Some aspects of the curriculum, including linking sounds and letters, are carefully planned and taught effectively. However, staff do not always make sufficient use of the information they hold on children's progress to inform the next steps in learning. This contributes to a relatively slow pace of learning for some children, particularly the most able. The school's own data suggest that boys' progress may not be as rapid as that of girls although this has not been analysed in detail. Overall, there is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Some activities do not take sufficient account of children's existing knowledge. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. Resourcing is good.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of the learning, development and welfare requirements and form a cohesive team.

*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**

A relatively low proportion of parents and carers responded to the survey. However, almost all are happy with the school, with the care it provides for their children and with the changes instigated by the headteacher. They feel that the school engages well with parents and carers and that their children enjoy school. One said, 'I have nothing but praise for St Botolph's – the staff are fantastic.' A few parents and carers raised concerns about issues specific to their children, often reporting that these had

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now been addressed. Several mentioned that the school had, in the last two years, become much more proactive in identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Botolph's Church of England Voluntary Aided 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 208 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	60	27	35	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	71	23	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	31	50	64	3	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	41	35	45	5	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	50	35	45	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	42	38	49	6	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	47	40	51	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)	37	47	33	42	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	42	37	47	4	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	33	45	58	6	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	27	47	60	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	35	45	58	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	55	34	44	0	0	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.**

24 September 2011

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of St Botolph's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Northfleet, DA11 9PL**

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you, hearing your views and spending time in lessons. We found that while yours is a satisfactory school, it has lots of strengths. These are the things we liked best.

- You have good attitudes to learning.
- You feel exceptionally safe in school, behave well and attend frequently.
- You make a good contribution to school and have good links with the local community.
- Staff care for you and support you well.
- You have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and staying fit.
- The curriculum, while satisfactory, provides some interesting topics, activities and visits. The provision for clubs and after-school activities is good.
- Those of you who need extra help are supported well and generally make good progress. This is not usually the case for those who learn quickly.
- The headteacher and governors work hard to make the school better.

To help you all to do even better, we have asked the school to do the following things.

- Ensure that teaching right across the school provides you all – particularly those of you who learn quickly – with greater challenge so that you make more rapid progress.
- Ensure that school leaders at all levels are focused on the most important priorities for the school and are rigorous in improving teaching and checking the quality of your work.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard and doing your best. We hope that you will have every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

George Logan  
Lead inspector

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