

# St Catherine's Church of England Nursery and Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number Local Authority Inspection number Inspection dates Reporting inspector 113463 Devon 378713 15–16 November 2011 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 Aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jeff Williams
Headteacher	Martin Harding
Date of previous school inspection	30 June-1 July 2009
School address	Musket Road
	Heathfield
	Newton Abbot
	Devon
	TQ12 6SB
Telephone number	01626 832665
Fax number	01626 834232
Email address	admin@stcatherines-heathfield.devon.sch.uk

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# Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons, taught by seven different teachers. 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 and safeguarding policies; they also scrutinised samples of pupils' work. The inspectors analysed 52 questionnaires from parents and carers, eight questionnaires from staff and 70 from pupils.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well do pupils across the school progress with writing?
- Do more able pupils make the expected amount of progress?
- How well does the school promote community cohesion?
- How effectively do subject leaders carry out their work of monitoring and evaluating the provision and outcomes in their areas of responsibility?

# Information about the school

This is a below average sized primary school. It serves the local area with a few pupils coming from further afield. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Most of the pupils are White British, with a very small number coming from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The school has two mixed-year classes; one of these is for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and one is for pupils in Years 4 and 5.

The school began working in partnership with St Michael's School, Kingsteignton in April 2010 and the two schools became federated in April 2011. The two schools are led by an executive headteacher, with a head of teaching and learning based at St Catherine's to oversee the day-to-day management of the school. The school has links with the adjacent Children's Centre. The school holds the Eco Schools Silver Award.

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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 very rapidly over the last 12 months. The improvement has come about as a result of its very successful partnership with St Michael's School. Parents and carers are very pleased with the provision. Typical of the comments from them were, 'The school has improved 100% ... the children are now proud of their school and come out of it with happy faces.' The school's mission statement, 'Dream, believe and achieve' is very much embedded in its work. Many pupils who were previously struggling or disenchanted now feel that school is an exciting place to be.

Children make an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where outstanding provision helps them make very good progress. As a result of good teaching throughout the school, pupils achieve well from their starting points and attain average levels by the end of Year 6. Their attainment in writing is not as good as in reading and mathematics. This is particularly the case for boys.

Staff have good relationships with pupils and effectively encourage them to do their best. In the main, all groups of pupils, including those who are more able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, become confident and enthusiastic learners. Very occasionally, work in lessons is not sufficiently challenging for more able pupils. Lessons are mostly interesting and engage the pupils well. The well-planned curriculum makes good use of the outdoor environment, including the well-maintained school gardens and adjacent woodland area. Most pupils have good knowledge about how to stay healthy and fit.

The active school council makes a positive impact upon improving the school. For example, they were heavily involved in the design and making of the new environmental pond area within the school grounds. Through their involvement in charity fundraising and participation in local events, pupils make a good impact on the life of the local community.

Pupils gain very strong spiritual awareness. For example, work carried out by pupils in the outdoors ensures that they gain an excellent appreciation of and sensitivity towards the natural world around them. The school's Christian ethos is apparent in the way pupils look after each other. They show a very good level of moral and social awareness. The school's increasing range of international links, which incorporate opportunities for video conferencing, ensure that pupils gain an outstanding awareness about how people from other cultures and communities live.

The promotion of community cohesion is first-rate.

Staff know the pupils well and cater sensitively for their personal needs. Pupils are confident to speak to adults if they have a concern. They feel safe and are safety conscious. They enjoy their time at school and their attendance is above average. Pupils behave well. The good support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they make good progress in line with their peers.

The headteacher and senior leadership team do a good job. They work hard with staff and the governing body to ensure that all aspects of school improvement planning move forward at a rapid pace. As a result, teaching and pupils' achievement in particular have improved a great deal over the last year. The work of the governing body is outstanding. It monitors the school's work very closely and is very proactive in ensuring the right courses of action are followed to secure improvement. The governing body is very effective in supporting staff as well as holding them to account. It has ensured that very strong procedures to promote community cohesion have secured a very wide range of links both locally and further afield. Accurate self-evaluation, good progress made since the previous inspection, excellent teamwork established among staff and clear plans to guide future improvement mean the school has a good capacity to sustain improvement in the future.

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

- Raise attainment of all pupils, particularly for boys in writing to match that in reading, by December 2012 by:
  - providing a greater range of opportunities for writing that specifically link with pupils' interests and everyday experiences
  - expanding pupils' ideas and vocabulary through more opportunities for activities such as role play and drama, prior to writing.
- Ensure by December 2012 that more able pupils make the progress expected of them by:
  - making sure that all lessons contain activities that challenge them
  - providing early access to activities specifically designed for them as soon as possible in lessons.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

Children start school showing skills that are well below the expected levels. They make rapid progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In spite of closing the gap significantly their attainment remains below average when they begin Year 1. In nearly all of the lessons observed across the rest of the school, pupils made good progress. Pupils have well-developed basic skills to help them in their future lives. Staff have been particularly successful in raising attainment in mathematics so it is

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now slightly above average. Pupils in Year 1 were seen gaining an appropriate understanding of how to sort objects by their properties while in Year 2 pupils showed a reasonable ability to measure accurately and make estimates about size. In Year 6 pupils worked well with practical problem-solving tasks and showed good skills in applying what they were learning. The strong emphasis on ensuring younger pupils' gain a secure knowledge and understanding of letter sounds means that pupils across the school become confident readers and reach the expected levels. Efforts to raise standards in writing are taking longer to have an impact than actions to improve reading and mathematics. Many pupils manage to write reasonably detailed accounts and stories by the end of Year 6. However, some pupils, particularly some boys, are less enthusiastic and not confident in committing their ideas to paper. As a result, they do not write as extensively as they should and the range of vocabulary used is limited. Many pupils across the school develop a reasonable degree of confidence in articulating their ideas verbally. For example, in a personal, social and health education lesson, pupils in Years 4 and 5 talked fluently about their feelings and ideas.

Pupils are polite and very friendly and support each other well. They carry out responsibilities conscientiously, such as being members of the school council or helpers at playtimes. Through the ongoing work that led to the school gaining the Eco Silver Award, pupils gain a good insight into the importance of caring for the environment. Their work in tending the school gardens and growing vegetables not only helps them learn how to make the community a better place, but also enriches their awareness of healthy living. Pupils' safety awareness is heightened through the good opportunities they have to assess the risks involved in the wide range of adventurous outdoor pursuits in which they participate.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	
Taking into account:	3
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	<u> </u>
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	2
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 <sup>1</sup>	2

#### These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

<sup>&</sup>lt;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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**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

The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent of pupils opinitually morally bookar and cultural development	-

#### How effective is the provision?

Teachers use a good range of strategies to make learning interesting for pupils. They ensure that wherever possible, activities are based on good quality practical experiences and use a wide range of resources to present work in a stimulating way. For example, the use of practical resources, with opportunities to talk about their ideas in a Year 2 science lesson, helped pupils to develop confidence and secure skills in carrying out investigations. Similarly, good discussion work in a Years 3/4 English lesson got pupils thinking intensively and helped them focus well on the comprehension tasks. In the main, teachers use assessment information well to inform their lesson planning so that tasks are matched closely with individual needs. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards very well to enliven presentations. For example, in many lessons, the good use of PowerPoint and video clips ensured pupils rapidly accessed new ideas. Very occasionally, teachers spend too long with the whole class doing the same work at the start of lessons, with too little time for pupils, especially the more able, to work at their own pace on more challenging work. Teachers have rightly recognised that there are not always enough opportunities for pupils to write about everyday experiences and areas that specifically interest them or to enrich their vocabulary, prior to writing, through activities such as drama and role play. Where these strategies were deployed in a Year 6 English lesson, there was a very clear increase in pupils' desire to learn, especially the boys.

Teachers and teaching assistants work well together. Support is tailored very carefully to help individuals and groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are carefully monitored and supported to ensure they progress well. Teachers set clear targets, which pupils work hard to achieve. They mark pupils' work very carefully and provide clear information about how to improve.

Much of the pupils' enjoyment in school is derived from the very interesting and wellplanned topics included in the curriculum. The internationally based curriculum, which goes well beyond the basic requirements of the National Curriculum, ensures that good cross-curricular links make work meaningful for the pupils. The curriculum is enriched through a good range of trips, visitors, links to partner organisations and extra-curricular activities. Pupils especially enjoy the adventurous outdoor activities including caving, scuba diving and mountain biking.

Staff have a good understanding of pupils' pastoral needs and cater for these sensitively. Good quality advice and guidance are given to all pupils and, where needed, their parents and carers. Case studies show the school has made good progress in helping pupils with particular social and emotional needs. Staff are vigilant in ensuring pupils' safety. Wherever needed, full use is made of a wide range

of external expertise to support pupils' needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	
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	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	

### How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher strongly supported by the head of teaching and learning at the school has very effectively established a climate in which all members of the school community feel valued. Staff have been inspired by the fast pace of change over the last year since the school became linked with St Michael's school. Morale is now high and there is much enthusiasm stemming from the close working relationship, shared expertise and greater opportunities for professional development with the partner school. This has secured particular improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and the curriculum. Senior leaders support staff very effectively. Subject leaders carry out their roles well and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Robust new procedures have been implemented to aid staff in checking pupils' progress. Staff make good use of the information gained, to check that no individuals are slipping behind. As assessment systems are new, the school is aware that staff need further training to ensure they make the best use of the information available. However, staff ensure that all pupils are well supported and have an equal opportunity to succeed.

Staff and the governing body work closely together. They work hard to establish good relationships with parents and carers. For example, regular newsletters, and very well organised meetings are provided to keep parents and carers well informed. The fullest possible use is made of all partner organisations to enhance the work of the school.

The governing body is very well organised. It is has set a very clear vision for the school's future educational direction. It ensures that good provision for safeguarding is underpinned by full risk assessments and training for staff and its own members. The school has excellent plans to promote community cohesion. The excellent strategy to link with organisations further afield, which has helped pupils develop outstanding multicultural awareness, is an example of the very strong impact of the school's work in this area.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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**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

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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Outstanding organisation of provision in the Nursery and Reception classrooms ensure that children make a strong start when they begin school in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parents and carers are very pleased with the provision in this part of the school. Many enjoy the chance to come into the classroom at the beginning of the day to interact with the staff and share reading activities. The provision is set up to provide attractive and very lively activity areas. The excellent curriculum ensures that children are provided with a rich range of interesting resources and activities to engage them and to inspire an enthusiastic approach to learning. There is an excellent balance of these activities both indoors and outdoors. Reception children especially enjoy the outdoor environmental work in the adjacent woodland.

The classrooms have easy access to a very well designed, spacious and attractive outdoor area where children work and play happily and safely. Teaching ensures children have a very wide range of opportunities to explore and investigate individually and to work closely with other children or with adult guidance. All staff work extremely well together to support children so they feel safe and fully encouraged and enjoy their time in school. A very good example was when two children, who were a little tearful and upset on arrival at school, rapidly became happily involved in the interesting activities underway. Children guickly appreciate the daily routines and how to conduct themselves. Reception children rapidly acquire a basic spoken vocabulary and learn to record with simple pictures and initial attempts at writing letters. They gain an appropriate understanding of basic letter sounds. Children learn to concentrate and in lessons most listen very well to the staff. Children respond very well to staff and their behaviour is excellent. Staff very carefully monitor and record all aspects of children's progress and use assessment information very well to inform planning so that tasks match children's needs precisely. The Early Years Foundation Stage is extremely well led and managed.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation	1
Stage	L

### Views of parents and carers

The level of response by parents and carers returning the questionnaires was above average. The very large majority of parents and carers indicated they are happy with the provision and the work of the staff. In addition to the evidence of the questionnaires, all of the parents and carers spoken to had a high regard for the school. Very few parents and carers had any negative views about the school.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Catherine's Church of England Nursery and 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 inspectors received 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 159 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Stro agi		Ag	ree	Disa	gree		ngly gree
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	77	11	21	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	73	12	23	2	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	67	16	31	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	63	19	37	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	36	69	16	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	65	17	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	63	16	31	2	4	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)	30	58	17	33	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	58	19	37	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	65	17	33	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	65	13	25	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	73	14	27	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	83	9	17	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	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).

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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgement in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.	
	<ul> <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.



17 November 2011

Dear Pupils

#### Inspection of St Catherine's Church of England Nursery and Primary School, Newton Abbot TQ12 6SB

Thank you for making us feel welcome at your school. We have judged that yours is a good school. Through talking to you and through 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.

- You make an excellent start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You enjoy school and the well-planned curriculum makes sure you get lots of interesting activities.
- You know a lot about how to stay fit and healthy.
- Good teaching helps you to progress well and your teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting and fun.
- Your behaviour is good and you have positive attitudes towards learning.
- You all have a good understanding about how to stay safe. The adults in the school do a good job of taking care of you.
- The headteacher, staff and governing body have done a good job to improve your school and they work hard to make sure it keeps improving.

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

- Improve your writing, particular for the boys, by providing you with more opportunities to write about your interests and everyday experiences and to participate in drama work to help you expand your vocabulary and ideas.
- Ensure that those of you who sometimes find work easy are always given enough time to work on challenging activities.

All of 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

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