

# Oliver Tomkins Church of England Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	126440
<b>Local authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	381236
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Alison Cogher

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>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	167
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Nigel Howarth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rhian Cockwell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Beaumaris Road Toothill Swindon SN5 8LW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01793 872100
<b>Fax number</b>	01793 872100
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@olivertomkins-jun.swindon.sch.uk">admin@olivertomkins-jun.swindon.sch.uk</a>

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Alison Cogher

Additional Inspector

George Long

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors watched a range of subjects being taught in 17 lessons and observed eight teachers. Within these lessons, the contribution made by teaching assistants was observed, including their working with individual pupils. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and some pupils from Years 3 and 6 read to an inspector. A range of school documents were scrutinised, including those relating to safeguarding, records of pupils' attainment and progress, self-evaluation information and the school improvement plan. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. The views of pupils, staff and 67 parents and carers were considered, as expressed through the returned questionnaires.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized school. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a small minority of pupils coming from a number of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The numbers of pupils from these groups in each year group vary markedly. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs is average. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school became part of a hard federation with the neighbouring infant school in 2011. The school has achieved a number of awards, including Artsmark Silver and Healthy School Plus status.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Oliver Tomkins Junior is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly but is not yet good because inconsistencies remain in teaching and the rate of pupils' learning. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- The achievement of pupils, including pupils learning English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Most pupils are making better progress than in the past as weaknesses in pupils' progress are being addressed. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average.
- Teaching since the last inspection has typically been satisfactory but it is improving quickly. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well so lessons are calm and focused on learning. At times, assessment information is not used well enough to ensure that activities are always tightly matched to pupils' learning needs. In marking, pupils are not always provided with clear guidance about how to improve, and the expectation that they will respond to suggestions for improvement is not always followed through. Some pupils are developing the skill of assessing their own work against specific success criteria but this is not a feature of all lessons. Opportunities are missed to support pupils' learning through practical activities.
- Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. Relationships throughout the school are respectful and supportive. Pupils enjoy school, have positive attitudes to learning and work well together.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have shown strong leadership as they have taken the school through a period of change. The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are effective, with some notable improvements, for example in the teaching of reading. The areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection have been addressed.

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

- Improve teaching and the progress pupils make in their learning to a consistently good or better level by July 2013 through ensuring that:
  - teachers' marking gives pupils clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work, and pupils are given the time to read and respond to it
  - assessment information is used well to plan activities that are tightly matched to pupils' learning needs
  - pupils are provided with more opportunities to check their own learning against specific success criteria
  - pupils have more opportunities to engage in practical activities to support their learning.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils' attainment when they start in Year 3 is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been below average for some years but is rising as pupils' rates of progress accelerate due to the effective teaching now increasingly evident in the school. Pupils' attainment across the school is now broadly in line with expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to use their skills in these subjects for a variety of purposes in a range of subjects.

Pupils' achievement is improving rapidly as gaps in their learning are addressed. This improvement is evident in pupils' work, the school's data and in lessons and is a result of the actions taken in response to accurate school self-evaluation. It is clearly exemplified by pupils' much improved progress in reading that has been secured by ensuring that the teaching of reading happens during a specific allocated time. Teachers' skills in the teaching of reading, including the teaching of letters and the sounds they make, have improved. Pupils who need extra support to enable them to make progress receive help that is tailored to their individual needs. As a result of this approach, pupils' enjoyment of reading a variety of books and their ability to use a range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words has improved markedly.

Writing is improving as teachers use a broader range of strategies to engage pupils' interest. For example, pupils in Year 6 took on the role of Snow White or the evil stepmother. This helped them to consider the questions they might ask to get information to support their writing of a character profile. They engaged in this activity with enthusiasm and were keen to share their work with each other and their teacher.

Improvements in pupils' achievement in mathematics are particularly evident when pupils are given the opportunity to use practical equipment to help their learning. For

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example, the use of a metre stick helped pupils in Year 3 to actually see centimetres and millimetres. This contributed well to their understanding of why numbers get bigger or smaller when converting from one unit of measurement to another. Opportunities to capitalise on the benefits of this hands-on practical approach are not a consistent feature of lessons across the school.

All groups of pupils make similar progress. Pupils learning English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils because of the well-targeted interventions and support they receive. Parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire consider their children to be making good progress, a view also held by pupils themselves. Inspection evidence shows that improvements are being secured but that inconsistencies have not been entirely eradicated, hence overall progress is satisfactory.

### **Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Improved procedures to assess pupils' work have increased the accuracy of the assessments made. Although assessment is used successfully, in the majority of lessons, to plan activities that take pupils' learning forwards at a good rate, this good practice is not yet sufficiently widespread. As a result, the work set does not always ensure that pupils make good progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan lessons that are well structured and capture pupils' interest. The management of pupils' behaviour is good and positive relationships ensure pupils are keen to show what they know and can do. They understand that making errors is part of learning and are confident that adults will help them to correct their misunderstandings. For example, when calculating the mean and range of a set of data, pupils in a Year 5 class provided a range of possible answers, all of which were valued by their teacher. Although not all of their responses were correct, pupils remained very focused and listened attentively as the teacher showed why some of their answers were incorrect, and to her clear explanation of how to calculate the correct answers.

In good and outstanding lessons, teachers check pupils' work carefully so any uncertainties or misunderstandings are addressed quickly. For example, through effective questioning, pupils in Year 6 were helped to understand the importance of providing specific guidance for actors as part of their play-scripts. The marking of pupils' work is regular and generally encouraging but is not used consistently well to give pupils specific guidance on how to improve; in addition, pupils are not always given the time to read and respond to teachers' comments. Pupils enjoy checking their own learning against success criteria but they are not consistently given the opportunity to do so.

Teaching assistants make a good contribution to pupils' learning in lessons, particularly for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They ensure that these and other pupils who need additional help to access confidently the planned activities are able to do so by, for example, providing additional explanations

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or recording their ideas.

The well-planned curriculum supports pupils' curiosity and independence as learners. Pupils' interest is captured through the planning of topics based around a key question such as 'What put the great in Great Britain?' or 'What if there was no water?' Pupils greatly enjoy learning through practical activities, although opportunities for this type of work are sometimes lacking. There is a good emphasis on promoting pupils' personal development. They are afforded time to reflect on their ideas and feelings and they have many opportunities to work together with a 'talk partner' or in small groups.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good in lessons and around the school. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when pupil behaviour was identified as an issue for improvement. Procedures for managing pupils are consistently applied by all staff and pupils understand and accept the school's high expectations. Pupils are polite, friendly and respectful towards each other and adults. They look after each other and show genuine delight in each other's achievements. Attendance is above average and reflects pupils' enthusiasm for school. Pupils show good levels of motivation in lessons as they work hard to complete the tasks they are set. Most parents and carers who responded consider behaviour overall to be good. A very small minority expressed some concerns about pupils' behaviour in lessons. Inspection evidence, including the scrutiny of school documents and observations of pupils at work, shows that incidents of unacceptable behaviour have reduced significantly and are now rare. Pupils who find behaving well difficult are very well supported. They are helped to take responsibility for successfully managing their own behaviour and this ensures that disruption to their learning and the learning of their classmates is minimal.

Pupils feel safe at school. This confidence is reflected in the views expressed by the vast majority of parents and carers who responded. Pupils have a good awareness of different forms of bullying, including physical harassment and cyber-bullying. Pupils, parents and carers consider that bullying of any kind, although very rare, is dealt with effectively by the school. The well-planned curriculum provides pupils with good information and guidance to help them effectively manage personal everyday risks, such as those associated with the internet.

### **Leadership and management**

Senior and middle leaders have been unflinching in their drive for improvement in all aspects of the school's work, including, as the main priorities, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The governing body is fully involved in the process of school improvement and has provided valuable support, but also challenge, during a period of change. Improvements secured since the previous inspection demonstrate the school's capacity to improve further. The improvement in pupils' behaviour, in terms of both their social interaction and motivation to learn, reflects the success of

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the actions taken. The school is a calm, orderly and supportive environment in which pupils are able to develop as individuals and to learn. The curriculum provides pupils with many memorable experiences whilst also ensuring they are supported well in their learning of reading, writing and mathematics skills. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the values and expectations that underpin all school activities.

The improved attendance of pupils is testament to the school's success in working with parents and carers. Safeguarding procedures are clearly understood by all, consistently applied and supported effectively by the school's close working partnership with a number of outside agencies. Efforts to improve teaching and learning through professional development and the management of performance have been successful and the momentum of improvement is increasing. There is a clear expectation that teachers must take responsibility for the progress made by pupils in their class and that any underachievement is spotted, and tackled quickly through sharply focused support or intervention work. These procedures contribute to the school's promotion of equality by ensuring that all pupils, including those learning English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, receive the help they need to make similar progress to other groups. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the school operates as a harmonious community where everyone is valued.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



23 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Oliver Tomkins Church of England Junior School, Swindon  
SN5 8LW**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited you recently. We enjoyed reading your questionnaires, talking to you, hearing some of you read and looking at the work you do in lessons. The school is giving you a satisfactory education, and is getting better. Your attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is similar to that of most pupils your age.

Here are some of the things we liked most about the school.

- The headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to make sure the school gets better.
- You are polite and friendly and your attendance at school is good.
- You enjoy your lessons, work well together and are pleased to share what you have learned with your teachers and each other.
- Teaching is improving so you are learning more in lessons and have made better progress this year.
- You feel safe at school because the school takes good care of you.

So that the school gets even better, we have asked the teachers make some changes. When they mark your work, we have asked them to make it clear exactly what you need to do to improve and to give you time to read what they have written and respond to it. We also want them to help you to check your own work, and to give you more practical activities in lessons to help you with your learning.

You can help by continuing to work hard in lessons and by listening carefully to your teachers and following their advice about how to improve your work.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher  
Lead inspector

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