

# St Stephen's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	125187
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	385872
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Hilary Macdonald HMI

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>	167
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Gooch
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lynn Gannon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 March 2011
<b>School address</b>	Hunter's Chase South Godstone Surrey RH9 8HR
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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<b>Inspection number</b>	385872



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Hilary Macdonald

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ronald Elam

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons taught by eight teachers. Of these, eight were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors listened to a range of pupils read and analysed the work in pupils' books. Meetings were held with pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and school staff including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including assessment data, monitoring evidence and strategic planning and evaluations. Inspectors took account of questionnaires completed by 54 parents and carers, nine staff and 47 pupils.

## Information about the school

St Stephen's is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It serves the local community and surrounding area and has specialist provision for 12 pupils with visual impairment. Most pupils are of White British heritage and nearly all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly above average, as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. There is an independent on-site nursery that is not managed by the governing body and was not part of this inspection. The school does not meet the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement and progress.

Since the school was last inspected, there has been a change in both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body.

**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>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the achievement of pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. Although the school has made a number of significant improvements, it is still not a satisfactory school because the achievement and progress of pupils are not yet consistent across the school. There is clear evidence that most pupils in school currently are making at least satisfactory progress; however, this is not enough to ensure that all pupils attain the levels they are expected to reach.
- Almost all teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory, with approximately half that was good. This confirms that the rigorous evaluation of teaching performance in the last few months, which concluded that teaching quality is now satisfactory and improving, is effective. However, inadequate teaching has not been fully eradicated.
- Behaviour and safety in lessons and around school are satisfactory. Generally, pupils behave and attend well. Less good behaviour occurs in lessons where expectations are not high enough. Systems are in place to manage incidents of poor or unacceptable behaviour and these are being applied with increasing consistency.
- The headteacher is leading the school with determination and success to improve the education offered to pupils, concentrating especially on the leadership of teaching and improving the school's overall performance. Individualised support for staff has resulted in an increase in the amount of good teaching. Leadership is currently not well enough distributed throughout the school. All staff are aware of their accountabilities, but the role of subject

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leaders does not consistently contribute to driving up the performance of all staff and pupils.

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

- Raise attainment and pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school, so that it meets or exceeds the government's current floor standards, by:
  - ensuring consistency in all classes in implementing recent changes in the teaching of English and mathematics
  - strengthening teachers' understanding of the interpretation and use of assessment data on pupils' progress.
  
- Ensure that the quality of all teaching is at least good throughout the school by:
  - ensuring that lesson planning makes precise use of assessment information, particularly that on the most and least able pupils and especially lower attaining boys
  - ensuring that pupils are given maximum opportunity to develop as active and independent learners
  - ensuring, through more effective marking and discussion, that pupils know exactly the steps to take in order to reach their next level of attainment.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of the school's leadership by:
  - providing middle managers with opportunities and responsibilities to help them gain more experience and confidence in leading staff through the management of change
  - ensuring that subject leaders focus increasingly on pupils' progress and overall achievement.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is uneven, particularly in Key Stage 2, reflecting inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Although pupils' attainment is low, it is improving because an increasing amount of teaching is effective.

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that vary each year and range from being in line to well below those typical for their age. They make good progress in Reception because teaching encourages them to think for themselves. For example, children could explain what they were learning and what the challenges were in a wide variety of practical activities, including filling clear cups with coloured water and describing quantities such as 'half-full' or 'almost empty'. By the time they join Year 1, typically, just over half of the children reach the level expected for their age, although there is significant variation year by year. Over time, pupils have made faster progress in Year 2 than in Year 1, due to more successful and rigorous

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planning with tasks that are well matched to their learning needs, as well as high expectations for behaviour. Inspection evidence suggests that rates of progress are now more consistently good through Key Stage 1. Despite this, few of the current Year 2 pupils are reaching the higher levels in any subject and overall attainment is low as they are catching up on previous lost ground. Year 2 pupils enjoy reading and spoke to inspectors with understanding about the content of their books. However, despite current good progress, standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 remain below age-related expectations.

In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress has varied widely from class to class and, over time, it has been too slow. For a number of years, pupils have been leaving school at the end of Year 6 with low attainment in English and mathematics. National tests in 2011 showed that pupils did not meet the minimum levels of attainment expected nationally in either English or mathematics. Rates of progress have increased, with the majority of pupils making satisfactory or better progress. However, this is not enough to make up for previous lost ground and, as a result, achievement remains inadequate. More accurate assessment procedures and robust monitoring of teaching are resulting in more effective teaching and better learning by pupils. High attaining pupils in Year 5 were, for example, enabled to race ahead in a mathematics lesson when practising coordinates in all four quadrants as a result of careful planning and focused support from the class teacher. Lower attaining pupils in the same class also progressed quickly as the teaching assistant effectively made a rapid change to the planned activity, providing additional challenge and maximising learning. Not all pupils receive this level of support or challenge and subsequently they make slower progress. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. The previous discrepancy between rapid progress in specially tailored support groups and poor progress in class is diminished. Lower attaining boys progress less well than other groups in school.

The majority of parents and carers feel that their children are developing basic skills, and that the school is helping them to support their children's learning. Inspectors agree that there has been significant improvement in the teaching and support provided for pupils' development of mathematics and literacy skills, but there is still some way to go to eradicate all underachievement. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 read a variety of texts to inspectors. Current attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average, although overall attainment in writing and mathematics remains low.

**Quality of teaching**

There has been much improvement in the quality of teaching in the last year. Records of pupils' progress and their work show that the pace of learning is improving in most classes because teachers are planning consistently well. Most, but not all, use assessment strategies and data to provide for the individual needs of pupils. Sometimes, however, learning tasks for the most or least able pupils remain too easy or too difficult. A majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires consider that teaching is good in the school. Inspection evidence

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indicates that, while teaching has improved, at present it is satisfactory because some pupils are not reaching the standards of which they are capable.

The proportion of good teaching is steadily increasing, but leaders appreciate that this is still not consistent enough and are addressing the weaker and inadequate teaching that remains. A carefully planned programme of professional development, including coaching from the deputy headteacher, is linked to rigorous lesson monitoring by the headteacher. As a result, most teachers are increasingly confident in raising their expectations of what their pupils can achieve, and some, but not all, offer more active, independent and enjoyable learning experiences for pupils. This was observed in a fast-moving lesson in Year 4 where pupils were provided with photographs to stimulate their imaginations whilst writing powerful introductions to their stories. Pupils in this class were given opportunities to reflect on their own and others' writing, maturely offering suggestions for improvement. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent as is the use of individual learning targets. Some pupils are aware of the levels they are working at, but others are not. In some cases, marking is detailed but in others it is minimal and comments do not focus adequately on learning and the steps pupils need to take in order reach the next level of attainment. Where corrections have been asked for, these are frequently not completed as insufficient time is not set aside to do this in most lessons.

Teaching assistants are particularly effective in supporting pupils with visual impairment and pupils who require specialised nurturing support, as well as disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Teachers' provision of a planned curriculum has improved and there is a wider emphasis on using a topic or themed approach, such as 'Noah' in Year 2, to make effective links between subjects and extend the opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils, collective worship and opportunities to contribute to school life and support each other have a positive effect on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

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

Of the parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires, a higher proportion than usual indicated that they did not feel that behaviour was good and that they considered poor behaviour disrupts learning. Inspection evidence indicates pupils' behaviour is generally good in lessons and around the school and that this is typical over time. Inspection evidence also indicates that in the minority of lessons where expectations for good behaviour were not high enough, or where the school behaviour policy was not applied consistently, pupils lost focus and spent time chatting with friends. Pupils know, rightly, that there are still some pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour. However, such pupils are well supported and have individualised programmes. Older pupils enjoy their roles of responsibility, including that of team captain.

All pupils are considerate of the needs of others, both in school and in terms of fundraising for others around the world less fortunate than themselves. Pupils show

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an appropriate understanding of different types of bullying; for example older pupils told inspectors about cyber-bullying and staying safe on the internet. A small amount of racist language has been recorded and these transgressions have been dealt with swiftly by senior staff. Incidents such as these are rare and well managed if they do occur. As a result, pupils feel safe because they know to whom they can turn if they are concerned or upset. Pupils were adamant that inspectors should understand how well the school cares for them. Attendance has shown a steady increase and currently is above average, which is an indication of how much pupils enjoy school.

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Improvements to teaching and in the evaluation of pupils' progress show the school's satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement. The governing body has been strengthened and members have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Recently recruited governors bring relevant expertise and, with the school's leadership team, are resolute that the school will continue to improve. They are fully aware of their duties and, with school leaders, are rigorous in ensuring that procedures to safeguard pupils stay robust, are effective and that discrimination is not tolerated. School leaders work to engage in a fruitful partnership with parents and carers, although a significant proportion of questionnaire returns expressed concern regarding perceived lack of communication.

Since the previous inspection, and particularly during this academic year, there has been a significant shift in approach. The momentum for change is underpinned by the embedding of higher expectations for staff and pupils. Through carefully structured performance management and individualised professional development programmes, teachers have increased their teaching skills, although there remains some inadequate teaching which accounts for the variation in rates of progress made by some pupils. Middle leadership has not been as effective as it should be in supporting the quality of teaching across the school, although teachers in all classes now fully understand their own accountability for the progress of pupils in their class. The monitoring of pupils' progress is rigorous and sophisticated and a detailed analysis, completed by the deputy headteacher, exists to demonstrate how each group of pupils is performing. This is strengthening the promotion of equality by ensuring that remedial action is taken promptly when any pupil or group is failing to make the progress they should.

Improvements are planned systematically and current priorities are sharply focused on the most important areas for the school to move forward. Senior leaders are accurate in their assessments of the quality of teaching and recognise that there is still more to be done in order to achieve consistently good teaching and learning. Improving the quality of marking and feedback and raising attainment, particularly of lower attaining boys, had rightly been highlighted. Additionally, senior leaders rightly express the view that leadership is not yet fully distributed. Plans are in place to provide middle leaders with training and experience in order to effectively lead improvements in their subject areas and contribute to raising overall pupil



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achievement and the quality of teaching.

The curriculum offers pupils a breadth of experiences that make school and learning interesting and enjoyable. The provision made for a wider range of writing experiences has been notably effective in increasing progress in this area. Pupils' understanding and appreciation of the diversity of cultures in Britain has been given less consideration than other aspects of their social development. Assemblies focus well on respect for others and pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. Spiritual, moral and social development is effectively underpinned by the school's values and by an ethos of respect, friendship and care.

## 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.**



14 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Stephen's Church of England Primary School, South Godstone RH9 8HR**

Thank you for giving us such a friendly welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you in class, looking at your work and hearing your views. Our particular thanks go to those of you who met with us, read to us and talked about your learning. You told us that you feel safe, that you like your teachers and that you know it is important to work hard.

We found that for several years, you have not made as much progress overall in your learning as you should. This means that by the end of Year 6, pupils in your school have not been reaching the standards in reading, writing and mathematics that most children do. We found that the school's leaders, especially your headteacher and deputy headteacher, have taken notice of this and there are now signs of improvement in your work. Your teachers usually make sure that your work is interesting and challenging and that you are learning more skills in your literacy and numeracy lessons. We want to be sure that this improvement continues, so we have given the school a 'notice to improve', which means that other inspectors will come to look at your work again to make sure that the school is continuing to do better.

We have asked your headteacher to make sure that all teaching is of a good standard and that lessons are planned so that everyone, regardless of their level of ability, makes good progress. We have also asked that in lessons you are given opportunities to be active and develop your independent learning skills. When teachers mark your books, we have asked them to make sure that what you need to do to improve is made very clear to you. As well as this, we have asked that more teachers are given opportunities to take leading roles in aspects of school improvement. All of you can also be part of the school's continuing improvement by always trying your hardest and behaving well at all times.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Macdonald  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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