

Holy Apostles Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Unique reference number | 115679 |
| Local authority | Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 395327 |
| Inspection dates | 21–22 June 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Jenny Batelen |

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|--|---|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 200 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Christine Brooker |
| Headteacher | Gareth Davies |
| Date of previous school inspection | 17 May 2007 |
| School address | Battledown Approach Charlton Kings Cheltenham GL52 6QZ |
| Telephone number | 01242 526858 |
| Fax number | 01242 230128 |
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jenny Batelen

Additional inspector

David Wolfson

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors spent six hours watching 17 lessons and part lessons and observing seven teachers. They heard pupils read from Years 2 and 6. The inspectors also held meetings with pupils and staff, as well as with members of the governing body. They took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documentation, including policies, school action plans, pupils' work and records of their learning and progress. The inspectors observed and discussed pupils' behaviour and the school's safeguarding procedures. The inspectors also analysed 118 completed questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as 107 questionnaires completed by pupils and 18 by members of staff

Information about the school

The school is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a very small number from a range of different backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs or supported by school action plus. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has achieved the International Schools, Sing Up Gold and National Healthy Schools Plus awards.

An after-school club and playgroup, managed by private providers, are located on the school site and are subject to separate inspections.

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 | 1 |
| Achievement of pupils | 1 |
| Quality of teaching | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 1 |
| Leadership and management | 1 |

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. Pupils make rapid progress from their starting points and their attainment is well above the national average. The school's monitoring and tracking systems help staff to ensure that rapid progress and high attainment are maintained, but senior leaders have rightly identified that these need streamlining in order to be as effective as possible and so accelerate progress further.
- Shared values, understood by all staff and pupils underpin all work in the school and strengthen the motto of 'Learn Well – Live Well'. Pupils' excellent behaviour and care for one another, alongside highly positive attitudes to learning, mean that there is no evidence of any disruption by pupils in lessons and every pupil feels safe.
- The leadership of teaching and the management of teacher performance are rigorous. Teaching is monitored very effectively and new staff mentored so that they are quickly able to manage the school's expectations of high standards and excellent progress for every pupil. As a result, teaching is never less than consistently good and a great deal is outstanding. Tasks in lessons challenge pupils and always ensure that pupils learn exceptionally well. Pupils are clear about their targets and know what they must do to improve their work.
- Skilled teaching of sounds that letters make (phonics) enables pupils to develop highly successful strategies for reading and writing. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well planned for and supported to make equally good progress.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have very high aspirations for all pupils. The rigorous monitoring of the school's performance is ensuring that any improvements needed to any areas of school life are quickly identified and addressed. The high quality curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Refine the use of monitoring and tracking systems so that they are as effective as possible in ensuring all pupils' progress is further accelerated.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with a range of skills and understanding that are in line with age-related expectations and they make excellent progress throughout the Reception Year. This excellent progress continues throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 because teachers clearly understand the skills and abilities of their pupils and plan work that challenges and excites them. This was demonstrated in an English lesson for Year 5 pupils learning to extend their use of language and punctuation in work on 'The Wind in the Willows'. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm of the new words they were learning, such as 'acquaintance' and 'collywobblers', while the teacher constantly challenged pupils to use more complex punctuation. When asked 'Do you think you are making progress today?' one pupil answered 'Yes, because I am improving my punctuation.' By Year 6, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is well above average and this was clear from pupils' work and from records of their progress.

Skilled teaching of phonics, using a range of strategies, in the Reception Year and Key Stage 1 means that attainment in reading is above average in Year 2. When possible, the phonics teaching links to other subjects, as demonstrated when Year 2 pupils learnt how to spell polysyllabic words they would be using in their current science work. Pupils talk confidently about the range of books they read and why they enjoy them. A Year 6 pupil spoke of her enjoyment of Shakespeare plays and said 'My favourite is *Midsummer Night's Dream*, because it's fun'. Throughout the school, written tasks have very strong link to the topics pupils are studying. Year 1 pupils developed their story writing skills linked to their study of mini-beasts as they wrote about the journey of a snail moving home. Pupils worked in pairs to plan the story map and used oral skills to tell their partner the story. This then led to the confident and skilled writing of the story, with pupils enthusiastically engaged in the whole process.

The small number of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to all other pupils because their needs are clearly identified and they receive a good level of support with their learning. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds make excellent progress, quickly settling into school routines and making friends. Progress is just as good for the small number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

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Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Very strong relationships between adults and pupils encourage a positive learning atmosphere and a sense of fun. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy learning and are confident that they are helped to make good progress. Teachers make excellent use of ongoing and regular assessments that enable them to plan challenging tasks that meet the needs of individual pupils in their classes, including those identified as having disabilities or special educational needs. Pupils remain focused on these tasks, whether working individually, in pairs or in groups. Teachers regularly remind pupils of what they are learning and share examples of work done so far to encourage their class to complete the task and meet the objectives for that lesson. Teaching assistants provide skilled support to disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs and this, together with the ongoing targeted support from teachers, ensures their learning is as rapid as that of their classmates. All adults use probing questioning to encourage pupils to think more deeply about their work. Teachers' strong subject knowledge ensures that pupils gain a good grounding in the different areas of learning and this was demonstrated in a range of music sessions as pupils rehearsed for the end of term production. They sang tunefully, including in parts, understood music terminology and gained skills to improve their singing. The gold 'Sing Up' award recognises this work and parents and carers comment very positively about the excellent music in school.

Pupils are very clear about their learning and whether they are successful in meeting their targets. Oral and written feedback gives clear guidance about what has been done well and what would further improve the work. Opportunities to respond to written comments mean that pupils consolidate their learning and many pupils engage with their teachers in a dialogue about their progress. This was demonstrated in the pupil/teacher dialogue about progress in understanding ratio and proportion in Year 5 mathematics books.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage develop their skills through adult-led, child-initiated and independent activities. The well-resourced classroom area and stimulating outdoor area, used in all weathers, enable development in all areas of learning. Children showed great enjoyment of writing for a range of purposes in various learning areas, demonstrating their excellent understanding of phonics and how to use these to help their spelling. They role-played pirates, talked confidently about 'pirate' life and had a clear knowledge of what happened to pirates who were 'naughty' – 'they walk the plank!'

Teachers ensure that both early and higher order reading skills are taught extremely well. Strong links across the curriculum provide pupils with many opportunities to use their numeracy and literacy skills in a range of different subjects. Teachers provide many opportunities that contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A Year 6 personal, social and health education lesson clearly demonstrated this, as pupils reflected on Olympic and Paralympic values and related these to the school values.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Outstanding behaviour around school and in lessons means that pupils thrive. Pupils show highly positive attitudes to learning and a strong desire to achieve and learn well. They quickly settle to tasks and equally quickly come back together to share ideas and listen to their teacher and one another. The demeanour of adults in school is calm and quiet at all times and this provides an excellent role model for pupils. There are no concerns expressed by pupils or parents and carers about disruptions to lessons, and inspection evidence supports this view.

Pupils understand well about different forms of bullying and know how to respond to any difficulties, such as physical and cyber-bullying. They showed a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using modern technology. Pupils are confident that there is no bullying in the school and that any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are effectively dealt with by adults. Inspection evidence found that there are very few reported incidents and behaviour over time is consistently of a high standard. Playtimes are friendly, happy times and the school council's introduction of the 'buddy bus stop' is welcomed and used well by pupils.

Pupils have a very strong understanding of their own safety and what might threaten it, as was clearly demonstrated by a Year 2 pupil's comment 'This playground is 90% safe and 10% a bit unsafe when it's wet and a little bit slippery.' Pupils feel very safe in school and know they are well looked after, and parents and carers agree. Attendance is above average and parents and carers comment on how their children 'are happy to attend and are proud of their school'.

Leadership and management

The head teacher, senior leaders and managers, including the governing body, are very clear about the challenge of maintaining high standards and ensuring that pupils are able to make the best progress they can. They have high aspirations for the pupils and set challenging targets. Since the previous inspection, the school has increasingly developed its systems for keeping parents and carers informed, including using a range of modern technology and, as a result, most parents and carers feel well informed. This, and the accurate evaluation of the school's strengths and areas to develop, demonstrates the school's excellent capacity to make further improvements.

Rigorous monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress and sharing of this information with all staff ensure that pupils' progress is rapid and sustained, although the school recognises that these systems have become time-consuming and need refining to be fully effective. Teaching is monitored regularly and rigorously and ensures that the high quality is maintained and any minor weaknesses addressed. There is strong professional support for all staff to improve their practice, and senior leaders enable best practice to be shared. The highly skilled and knowledgeable members of the governing body are proactive and act as challenging and critical friends of the school.

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The well-balanced curriculum provides pupils with many memorable experiences that enhance their learning and understanding as well as strengthening their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The wide range of extra-curricular opportunities is valued by the pupils. Leaders ensure that there is no discrimination and that all pupils have equal access to the full curriculum. The International Schools award reflects the work done to enhance pupils' understanding of differences and similarities with other communities. Strong links with local schools and the local church give pupils an active presence in their local community, which is valued by parents and carers.

The school has effective procedures for safeguarding and risk assessments. These meet government guidelines and include high quality checks on adults, including robust arrangements for vetting staff appointments. The safety of pupils is very well managed and parents and carers expressed no concerns about their children's safety.

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).

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.



25 June 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Holy Apostles Church of England Primary School,
Cheltenham, GL52 6QZ**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. Thank you also to those of you who returned questionnaires about your school. We thoroughly enjoyed joining in your lessons, assemblies and rehearsals, and talking to you and sharing books with you.

You tell us that you think you are very lucky children here and we agree with you! You attend an outstanding school and there are many excellent things that impressed us.

- You behave extremely well, are always very polite, help each other and have an excellent knowledge and understanding of how to keep yourselves safe.
- You listen very carefully to your teachers and each other, work hard in lessons, know how well you are doing and also have a lot of fun while learning.
- All the adults in the school care a lot about you and make sure that you are very safe and well supported.
- You really enjoy the topics you study and the visits and visitors that make them exciting and interesting.
- The adults who manage and run your school work very hard to make sure you have the best opportunities to achieve well.
- You have excellent opportunities to make music and sing very tunefully – we wish you well in your production of 'We will rock you'!

The adults have lots of procedures for making sure that you make as much progress as possible and we have asked them to refine these and make sure that what they do is fully effective in helping you reach even higher standards.

All of you can help by making sure you continue to work hard, enjoy school, work and play well together and always remember the values so that you 'Learn Well–Live Well'.

Yours sincerely

Jenny Batelen
Lead inspector

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