

St Nicholas Church of England Primary School

Idmiston Road, Porton, Salisbury SP4 0LB

Inspection dates 21–22 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils work hard and they achieve well. They make good progress and standards are well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good across the school and the teaching of phonics (the links between letters and sounds) in different ability groups is outstanding. This is helping to raise attainment in reading across the school.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They have highly positive attitudes to learning and make every effort to improve their work.
- Pupils feel entirely safe within the warm and purposeful environment.
- The headteacher provides good leadership. Regular and effective checks on how well staff are performing and focused staff training have led to continuous improvements in teaching and good achievement.
- School leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to be further improved. They have successfully addressed the issues from the previous inspection and are capable of improving the school further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' introductions to lessons are sometimes overly long and this limits the time available for pupils to work by themselves.
- Outdoor play activities in Reception are insufficiently stimulating in mathematical calculation.
- Occasionally, teaching assistants do too much for lower-attaining pupils and do not ensure pupils apply their phonics skills when writing. This limits their progress in spelling words for themselves.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed nine lessons, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- The inspector heard pupils read, talked with pupils, looked at a wide range of their work, and examined the school's data on their attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body, senior leaders and teachers in charge of subjects. The inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Account was taken of the 36 responses to the online Parent View survey and staff's responses to questionnaires.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including plans for improvement, safeguarding arrangements, records relating to behaviour and attendance, governing body minutes and records of school leaders' evaluations of teaching in lessons.

Inspection team

Eileen Chadwick, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Nicholas is smaller than the average-sized primary school, although the number of pupils on roll has increased considerably in recent years. Most pupils come from the local village or the surrounding area.
- Most pupils are White British. A few are from minority ethnic groups, the largest of which are Travellers of Irish heritage. Very few pupils are at early stages of learning English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is slightly above average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, which is additional funding provided by the government for pupils eligible for free school meals, those looked after by the local authority and for children from service families, is average. About 12% of pupils are from military families serving in the army or air force. In the current Year 6, all of the pupils in receipt of the pupil premium are from military families. Currently, there are no pupils who are looked after by the local authority.
- The number of pupils who join the school other than at the normal time is high. In the current Year 6, half of the pupils joined the school in Key Stage 2.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school received an Ofsted Interim Assessment on 26 April 2011, which deferred an inspection.
- The school provides daily breakfast and after-school clubs, and also runs a holiday club, for its pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding and accelerate pupils' progress by
 - making sure teachers in Reception provide more challenging outdoor play activities for mathematical calculation
 - ensuring teachers' introductions are not too long so that pupils begin to work on their own more promptly
 - checking that teaching assistants help lower-attaining pupils to consistently apply their phonics skills when writing and do not do too much for them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and understanding that are mainly at the levels expected for their age. They make good progress with strengths in reading and writing. However, outdoor play activities are not consistently challenging in mathematical calculation.
- Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 is rising and above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The pupils who were heard to read during the inspection were very enthusiastic and showed good skills in reading new words.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress is generally good. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, standards are above average, with evidence pointing to rising standards in reading among current pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Scrutiny of work, lesson observations, hearing pupils read and the school's data show the current Year 6 pupils' attainment is well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. This represents good progress from pupils' starting points as the current Year 6 pupils entered Key Stage 2 with average attainment.
- The increased focus on reading and learning phonics in the last 18 months is helping to raise reading standards. Pupils do exceptionally well in phonics and the results they achieved in the Year 1 phonics check were substantially above the national average.
- Most pupils make good progress in writing, and by Year 6, they write competently in a range of subjects. Their handwriting is good and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Most pupils spell well, confidently applying phonics to new words. However, occasionally in Key Stage 2, teaching assistants sometimes provide words for lower-attaining pupils rather than encouraging them to sound out words for themselves, and this restricts their achievement.
- The close attention given to developing pupils' mathematical calculation skills and ability to apply these to mathematical verbal problems has a good impact on raising standards in mathematics.
- Well-focused, individual support promotes good progress for new pupils who arrive during the year sometimes with gaps in their knowledge and skills, disabled pupils, those with special educational needs, and those from minority ethnic groups, including Irish Travellers and those few who speak English as an additional language. However, intermittent attendance limits the overall attainment of Irish Travellers.
- Those in receipt of pupil premium funding make good progress. There are no significant differences between the progress of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from military families. In last year's tests, all of the pupils in receipt of pupil premium were from military families and they all achieved well. Their attainment in English and mathematics exceeded their national counterparts and was similar to other pupils in school, as shown by their average point scores. Inspection evidence shows these pupils' good achievement continues.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers provide interesting learning contexts, and relationships between pupils and adults are of a high standard. These help to create a positive learning situation where pupils thrive and learn well.
- The school has focused on improving pupils' reading and writing skills, and there is strong consistency in the methods teachers use to make sure teaching is good. For example, they have been trained to implement effective systems for teaching phonics and guided reading in every class. Phonics is exceptionally well taught in discrete sessions because activities are carefully matched to pupils' previous skills through well-considered ability setting across the school.
- Teachers make every effort to interpret the stimulating curriculum in ways that appeal to pupils and ensure they apply their literacy skills. For example, in Years 1 and 2, the teacher linked pupils' writing to their topic on 'Owls' when teaching pupils to write increasingly complex

sentences. The teacher's own handwriting was a good model for pupils and she skilfully enabled them to apply their phonics skills to help her 'sound out' words.

- In Key Stage 2, teaching during group work is often very well matched to pupils' needs, and pupils learn well. However, teachers' lesson introductions are occasionally too long in literacy and numeracy. This limits the time pupils are given to work by themselves.
- The quality of marking of pupils' work in English and mathematics has improved well since the previous inspection. Pupils are now clear what aspects of their work are good and how they need to improve.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff are quick to seize opportunities to develop children's communication, literacy and personal skills. The school is improving the quality of outdoor learning but, in mathematical calculation, the learning opportunities provided when children choose for themselves are insufficiently challenging.
- Teaching assistants often provide good-quality support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. However, there are a few instances when they do too much for pupils who have lower standards in literacy. Staff do not always insist these pupils apply phonics skills when writing, which prevents them being challenged enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. An atmosphere of mutual respect pervades the school and this is fully evident in the responses to the staff questionnaire, pupils' views and the opinions expressed in Parent View.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy and value their school, and this is reflected in above-average rates of attendance of almost all pupils. However, overall attendance is average because the few pupils from the Travelling community have long periods away from school when they travel with their families. Pupils' punctuality is extremely good and they move around the school calmly and quietly to ensure punctual starts to lessons.
- In lessons and playtimes, pupils learn and play exceptionally well together. Adults model positive relationships and, consequently, pupils show great respect and courtesy towards each other. The attractive displays of pupils' work and the well-organised school environment show that pupils care for their school and look after resources very well.
- Pupils confirm that behaviour is typically excellent, and say there is no bullying. Pupils are adamant that they feel safe and could turn to an adult if they were to feel unsafe. Pupils learn about different types of bullying, including how to stay safe when using the internet.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who completed Parent View felt their children are well looked after and kept safe. Several pupils who were later entrants told the inspector how much they enjoyed this school and how their progress had improved since attending.
- The broad and rich curriculum successfully gives pupils a sense of wonder in the world around them and contributes very well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This was seen in many lessons, for example when Year 6 pupils wrote science fiction stories after studying aspects of space in their topic work.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs are very well attended and resourced, and provide an excellent start and end to the day.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides clear leadership and has introduced effective systems for managing the school now it has grown. These include good systems for judging the school's performance and for making checks in lessons which focus on improving the quality of teaching.
- The headteacher is well supported by the assistant headteacher. Since her arrival, much has

been done to improve the accuracy of teachers' assessments so that staff play a full part in raising achievement. Senior leaders are well supported by the other leaders with particular responsibilities, who take a full part in improving pupils' achievement.

- Plans for improvement focus on the right priorities, and are based on accurate self-evaluation. Plans are detailed with appropriate actions that are systematically monitored to check that they are having the required effect.
 - For example, following staff training, Literacy Subject Leader has made thorough checks on the quality of teaching and given feedback to staff. This has led to systematic implementation of the system for teaching phonics across the school.
 - The thorough management of teachers' performance is linked well to further training. Decisions about teachers' pay and promotion are closely related to the quality of their teaching.
 - The school has found the robust challenge provided by the local authority helpful and has acted on its recommendations.
 - Provision for pupils eligible for pupil premium is well coordinated. Pupils from military backgrounds are helped to adjust particularly well to circumstances which sometimes change at short notice. Leaders use the additional pupil premium funding wisely to provide a part-time teacher and additional assistants so that teaching groups are smaller and eligible pupils are given closer attention.
 - The school promotes equality of opportunity by enabling all groups of pupils to achieve well. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school well, and what is good and what needs to improve. Together with senior leaders and staff, it is fully committed to ensuring all pupils achieve as well as they can. Governors are involved in checking the school's work and understand the data on its performance because members have had training. Governors ensure that the school's finances are managed effectively, and make sure that pupil premium funding is properly used to ensure it has a good impact on pupils' progress. They hold the headteacher to account and check teachers' performance and the quality of teaching, ensuring that the salary structure is closely linked to pupils' progress. Safeguarding policies and practices are robust, and the governing body ensures that they fully meet requirements.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	126404
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	403604

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoffrey Freeth
Headteacher	David Rolfe
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2008
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