

St Sampson's VC CE Primary School

Bath Road, Cricklade, Wiltshire SN6 6AX

Inspection dates	22–23 June 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The exceptional and determined leadership of the headteacher has secured rapid improvement since the school's formation in 2014.
- Governors and all staff have high aspirations for all. They are successful in achieving the improvement goals they set for the school.
- Parents are very pleased with the quality of education their children receive. They value how the school has improved since opening as a primary school.
- Teaching is good. Well-targeted training ensures that teachers continue to improve their skills.
- The checking of pupils' learning is very thorough and supports the good progress they make in lessons and over time.
- Most pupils reach at least average standards in reading and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils because of the well-targeted support and challenge they receive.
- The help provided for pupils with special educational needs or disability is effective and most make good progress. A few make rapid progress because of the care taken to match activities to their specific needs.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes. They make good progress due to the well-planned activities that interest and engage them.
- Pupils behave well and work hard in lessons.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They are proud of their achievements and their school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported very well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The standard of pupils' writing is often lower than for reading and mathematics.
- Procedures for identifying and correcting spelling errors in pupils' work are not consistently applied across the school.
- Pupils do not make best use of their knowledge of letter sounds to help them spell words correctly.
- A few pupils from Traveller communities who receive support make good progress in lessons, but their frequent absence impedes the progress they make over a longer period of time.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of writing to raise standards by:
 - making sure that pupils have a secure grasp of letters and the sounds that they represent and that they use this knowledge accurately when spelling words for themselves
 - making sure that procedures for identifying and correcting misspelt words in pupils' work are implemented consistently in all year groups.
- Work with the parents from Traveller communities whose children receive special educational needs support, to improve children's attendance at school so they can make better progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has set the school on a very clear direction of travel that has raised the expectations of staff and pupils. She has communicated this vision extremely successfully and has the support of governors, staff and parents. Clear goals are set and effective action is taken to achieve them. Rapid improvement has been secured in some areas, in particular supporting teachers and teaching assistants to improve through good ongoing training. The exceptionally thorough monitoring of pupils' progress has also been very effective in raising pupils' achievement. Staff morale is high.
- Subject leaders have worked alongside senior leaders to put into place a range of procedures that have successfully improved the teaching of reading, and mathematics. The teaching of writing has also improved, although there is more to do to lift standards further. Teachers are keen to share good practice and to learn from each other.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and in particular the improvement secured since it opened. Those who responded to the questionnaire or who spoke to inspectors expressed praise for the headteacher and staff, and for the information they receive about their child's progress. They appreciate the way the school communicates with them and the broad range of experiences, including the after-school clubs, provided for their children. They are confident that their children are safe, well cared for and happy at school.
- The school's values, including its commitment to ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed, are at the core of the school's work. Recently introduced systems for identifying pupils with special educational needs or disability, and tracking their progress, together with well-matched support ensure that most of these pupils make good progress. The difference made by specific support activities is routinely checked. Links with outside agencies are productive and help the school to support pupils effectively.
- Systems are in place to promote good attendance, and as a result, overall attendance has improved. This includes the attendance of many pupils receiving support for special educational needs or disability. Work to improve the attendance of pupils who receive such support and come from Traveller communities has been less successful and the progress they make over time is slower as a result.
- The curriculum is well organised and care is taken to make activities interesting for pupils so they work hard and make good progress. Pupils have many opportunities to use their writing skills in subjects such as history, geography and science. At times, however, the standard of pupils' writing is lowered because of inaccuracies in their spelling.
- Pupils' progress is tracked well and the information is regularly checked by teachers to ensure that pupils are making good progress. Teachers work together to moderate standards to make sure that assessments are accurate, and that planning takes full account of what pupils need to learn next.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and their understanding and appreciation of British values are strongly promoted through the curriculum. Values such as tolerance and respect are threaded through all of the school's work and are reflected in pupils' good behaviour and the way they work cooperatively together. Older pupils have a secure understanding of democracy and the rule of law. The school's 'Super Six' provide pupils with a clear code of expected conduct, and the six-step system for managing pupils' behaviour based on 'Your behaviour... Your choice...' is effective and ensures that the vast majority of pupils behave well almost all the time.
- The pupil premium funding is used well to ensure that disadvantage is no barrier to learning or participation in activities. The support provided is tailored to ensure that pupils achieve well academically and their personal development is good.
- The school makes effective use of the sports and physical education funding. A teacher is employed specifically to provide training for staff, and to lead the organisation of many activities provided during and after school. The impact of this work has been to increase the numbers of pupils regularly involved in physical activity, and their understanding of the benefits of leading an active lifestyle. Links made to mathematics and science, for example, when pupils assess their own performance, help pupils to understand how using the skills they have in one subject can support their learning in another.
- Good support from the local authority has helped the school to move forward quickly. Regular visits have challenged leaders to make changes swiftly, whilst also providing guidance on how to achieve success in key areas such as improving teaching.

■ The governance of the school

- The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well and has made a strong contribution to the school's successful journey since opening in 2014. Governors bring a broad range of expertise to the school. They take on roles within the governing body where their knowledge and skills can be used most effectively to support the school on its journey of improvement.
 - Governors have a secure grasp of the information on pupils' performance, and the broad range of information that is gathered through the evaluation of the school's improvement plan. They use their knowledge to both support and challenge school leaders and meet them regularly as part of their monitoring role. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and what needs further development.
 - Governors have a clear understanding of how the school is using the pupil premium and sports funding and the impact it is having on raising pupils' achievement. They know how the teachers' standards are used to tackle underperformance or to recognise when salary increases might be appropriate. Governors regularly attend training to become better informed, to keep up to date and to improve their own skills.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Taking swift action when necessary and thorough record-keeping help to ensure that pupils are safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Leaders have ensured that since the school opened, teaching has improved. They have unwaveringly focused on recognising and improving weaker teaching and identifying and sharing stronger and effective aspects. Improved teaching is the primary reason that pupils across the school are making good progress and achieving well.
- Teachers have and maintain high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They develop supportive, respectful relationships with pupils and expect them to behave well and to always try to do their best.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge. They use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and to correct any misunderstandings. Teachers listen carefully to pupils and make sure that they understand the point of their learning.
- The newly introduced assessment procedures ensure that teachers have up-to-date and accurate information about what pupils already know and can do. This allows them to plan activities that move pupils' learning on at a good rate. The varied levels of difficulty of these activities provide pupils of different abilities, including the most able, with the right level of challenge. Teachers are quick to move pupils of all abilities on during lessons when they demonstrate that they are ready to tackle their next step in learning. Pupils receive regular supportive feedback from teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, their confidence is good and they tackle new learning with a 'can-do' attitude. They are keen to improve and regularly check their own progress against their personal targets.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disability are well supported. Disadvantaged pupils are also helped to do well. Activities are often adapted, so pupils are able to engage well in lessons and make good progress.
- Links between subjects are explored to provide pupils with the opportunity to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Pupils are enthusiastic about what they learn in lessons and find the activities planned by their teachers to be interesting and fun.
- The teaching of reading is good and has a high profile throughout the school, and pupils make good progress. Pupils are helped to use a range of strategies, including using their phonics knowledge (the sounds that letters represent), to read unfamiliar words.
- The teaching of spelling, grammar and punctuation has improved and is helping to improve the quality of pupils' writing. Even so, there remain weaknesses in the teaching of spelling. Pupils' understanding of the sounds that letters represent is generally secure, but the expectation that they will apply what they know when spelling words in their writing is not high enough. Pupils' lack of precision results in incorrect spellings that contribute to the standard of their writing being lower than for reading and mathematics. In addition, not all teachers apply the school's marking policy. Spelling errors made by pupils are not always identified, or when they are, pupils do not always make the corrections asked for by their teacher.

- The teaching of mathematics has been strengthened in all year groups. Pupils develop a secure understanding of how to complete calculations quickly and accurately and enjoy the challenges they are set. They confidently choose an appropriate strategy for solving problems. Pupils are helped to understand the relevance of what they learn in mathematics as they use it to support their learning in subjects such as science and physical education.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school environment is calm and purposeful and centred on ensuring that pupils feel comfortable and well cared for. Their academic, social and emotional well-being is of the highest priority and all staff work diligently to ensure that pupils' needs are met.
- Pupils are clear about what it takes to be a successful learner. They eagerly engage in checking their progress against their personal targets and provide each other with feedback and pointers for improvement. Pupils are positive about their lessons and are confident that the feedback they receive from their teachers helps them to improve. Pupils respond well to the help they are given and take pride in all that they achieve.
- Pupils appreciate and enjoy the extensive range of activities offered during and after school. Many play a musical instrument or represent the school in sport. The extensive opportunities for engaging in physical activity and sport help pupils to understand how and why they should try to keep themselves fit and healthy.
- Staff's work to develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence is effective. Pupils feel supported and respond very well to encouragement and praise. Pupils are beginning to enjoy challenging themselves to improve as they choose activities with increasing levels of difficulty in subjects such as mathematics.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at school, a view reflected in the very positive response from parents. Pupils are confident that if they have a worry or concern, they could tell an adult and are positive that they would be supported.
- Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are very well supported. If necessary, they receive individual support and their day in school is modified to ensure that they feel safe and secure. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities at school and carry out tasks they are given in a mature manner. Pupils' views and ideas are conveyed, and acted on, through the work of the school council.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming. At times, such as when engaged in collective worship, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They demonstrate clearly that they understand that expectations of behaviour for specific occasions are different, and they try very hard to behave appropriately.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them during lessons and most behave well, work diligently, and focus on trying to meet the targets they are set. Most show good levels of self-control and there is minimal disruption of any kind to lessons. Pupils who find behaving well a challenge are managed well by staff, and over time their behaviour improves.
- The school is a very inclusive community and pupils treat each other and adults with tolerance and respect. Pupils form secure friendships and work together well. The school is a harmonious community to which pupils are very proud to belong.
- The attendance of most pupils is good and has improved recently as a result of the school's procedures which are rigorously implemented. A small number of pupils from Traveller communities who receive support for special educational needs do not attend school often enough and the progress they make over time slows as a result.
- Pupils report that bullying is very rare and is dealt with effectively if it does occur. Parents have positive views about the behaviour of pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- In 2015, the proportion of pupils who made the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics was similar to the national average. A similar proportion to the national figures made better than expected progress in writing. Even so, this was not enough to lift the standard of some pupils' writing to the same standard as their reading and mathematics. The majority of pupils move on to secondary school confidently and with the skills they need to succeed.
- The current information for all year groups in the school shows that pupils are making good progress, but more are reaching the expected standard in reading and mathematics than in writing. Pupils' work reflects this good progress.
- Over the last two years, an increasing proportion of pupils in Year 1 have achieved the required standard in the national phonics check (which tests their understanding of letters and the sounds they represent). The proportion is now very close to the national average. Pupils use their knowledge of letters and sounds confidently when reading, but across the school they are less secure when using this knowledge to spell words for themselves. Too many errors in spelling are made, and at times they are left uncorrected.
- Across the school, pupils write for a range of purposes in different subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4, who had visited Stonehenge as part of their work in history, wrote detailed accounts of their trip. Pupils' handwriting skills are good and they take care with the presentation of their work. The overall standard of pupils' written work is limited by the accuracy of their spelling.
- Pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and to help their learning in other subjects. By Year 6, they have become fluent and expressive readers who appreciate the wide range of texts available to them at school.
- The most able pupils make good progress because they are set tasks that make them think for themselves, and to apply their knowledge and skills. This is particularly effective in mathematics, where all pupils are regularly encouraged to apply their skills to tackle and solve increasingly challenging problems.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in each year varies and is often small, so it is not possible to make reliable comparisons with the progress and attainment of their classmates. Assessment information shows that individuals in this group of pupils make good and at times rapid progress and achieve well.
- Most pupils who have special educational needs or disability make at least good progress as a result of the support they receive. Some pupils make excellent progress when taught in a small group, and practical tasks give them the opportunity to be active, and to work together to find solutions. Teaching assistants support pupils skilfully during whole-class lessons or when working with individuals or small groups. This enables pupils to engage fully in activities with their classmates. The often poor attendance of pupils from Traveller communities who receive special educational needs support hinders the progress they make.

Early years provision

is good

- The good leadership of the early years ensures that teaching is effective and children make good progress from their starting points. Good links with the local pre-school settings and the work of Reception class teachers ensure that the school is clear about what children can do when they start school. Parents are fully informed and their contribution to their child's learning is welcomed. Children settle quickly and happily because of the good communication between the pre-schools, school and parents. Parents feel confident to approach staff if they have a question or concern and are appreciative of the guidance and support they receive so that they can help with their child's learning.
- There is a strong emphasis on supporting children's personal, social and emotional development and their communication and language skills. Together with reading, writing and number, these areas are often less well developed when children start school. The strong focus on helping children to improve in these areas has resulted in many more children being well prepared for Year 1 over the last two years.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together and frequently check children's learning. Their assessments are accurate and the information is used well to plan a rich and stimulating curriculum. Activities are well planned and organised, and closely matched to children's interests. Consequently, children are engaged and motivated and their learning moves on at a good rate.
- The indoor and outdoor areas are used effectively to encourage children to explore and investigate, and to use their imagination and to be active. They regularly go on 'welly walks' in the school grounds, which broadens their experiences further. Children quickly grow in confidence and enjoy their time together.

- All children, including disadvantaged children, those who have special educational needs or disability and the most able, are equally supported to achieve well. Close working between the early years and Year 1 teachers ensures a smooth and untroubled transition for children.
- Relationships are warm and supportive so children feel safe and well cared for. Respect and tolerance have a high priority and ensure that all children feel included and valued. Children are expected to behave well and most achieve this. Well-established routines and the encouragement and praise children receive from adults help those who find behaving well a challenge to improve. As a result, children are able to work and play together in a friendly and harmonious way.
- Staff regularly assess how effective activities have been at moving children's learning on, and if there are any areas that need greater attention. This process has identified the need to support children more with their understanding of numbers and the sounds that letters represent.

School details

Unique reference number	126317
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10012339

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	291
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Wallis
Headteacher	Jennifer Bayne
Telephone number	01793 750452
Website	www.st-sampsons.wilts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-sampsons.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened as a primary school in September 2014 following the joining together of the infant and junior schools. It is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A growing number of pupils come from Traveller communities.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is extra government funding to help the education of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics in Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 16 lessons or parts of lessons. All classes were observed at least once. Seven of the observations were conducted jointly with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, governors (including the chair of the governing body), staff with leadership responsibilities and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and during break- and lunchtime. An inspector also talked to pupils elected onto the school council.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and on display around the school, and listened to some pupils read.
- The views of the 35 responses to the staff questionnaire provided by Ofsted, along with the 38 pupil responses, were taken into account.
- The views of parents spoken to at the beginning of the day, together with the 72 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 59 texts received were also considered.
- A range of school documentation was reviewed, including information about pupils' attendance, their past and current progress and attainment, and the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. Information and policies relating to the safeguarding of pupils were also viewed.

Inspection team

Alison Cogher, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Linda Rowley	Ofsted Inspector

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