



St Stephen's Church of England Junior School, Soundwell

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109167
LEA South Gloucestershire
Inspection number 278145
Inspection dates 29 September 2005 to 30 September 2005
Reporting inspector Graham Sims RISP

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Lansdown Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Kingswood
Age range of pupils	7 to 11		Bristol BS15 1XD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01454 867175
Number on roll	307	Fax number	01454 867176
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev Ian Wills
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr Andrew Northgrave-Williams

Age group 7 to 11	Inspection dates 29 September 2005 - 30 September 2005	Inspection number 278145
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Stephen's is a larger than average voluntary controlled Church of England junior school. Almost all pupils are from a White British background and speak English as their first language. An average proportion of pupils are entitled to free school meals. Most pupils join the school with standards just above the national average. However, an above average proportion of pupils, around 22%, have learning difficulties or disabilities. There have been significant changes in staffing in recent years. The current headteacher, deputy headteacher and over half of the teaching staff have taken up their posts within the last 13 months.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Stephen's CE Junior School has seen rapid improvement in a number of areas over the last 12 months. The school provides a sound education for its pupils and gives satisfactory value for money. The school judges its overall effectiveness as good. Pupils' overall academic achievement is still inadequate, because pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding, and the school agrees with this. Whilst there have been good improvements in English, and pupils are reaching the expected standards for their age, they are not achieving as well as they should in mathematics and science. Disruptions and some inadequate teaching in the past are key factors in why pupils have not done as well as they could. However, the situation is improving. For the first time for a number of years, the school now has a full complement of permanently appointed staff. Whilst the quality of the teaching is still not entirely consistent, pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress in all classes. There are also examples of good and very good teaching in various classes, which is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. The leadership of the new headteacher has been the driving force behind the changes. There have been major improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes, the way the school is run, the organisation of the curriculum and the quality of the teaching – all of these areas are now at least satisfactory. The quality of care provided by the staff is good. The school now has a capable and stable leadership team. There are well formulated plans for the school's future development. The plans are based on a careful, and accurate, assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The progress made over the last year indicates good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve pupils' achievement in mathematics and science
- ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching, improving particularly the way teachers engage pupils' interest and make learning relevant to the needs of individual pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The improvements in provision have arrested the decline in standards and in the rate of progress. However, pupils are still not achieving well enough in mathematics and science because they are still in the process of making up lost ground. Standards at the end of Year 6 are close to the national average in English and below average in mathematics and science. The school was close to meeting challenging targets in English in 2005, but fell short of its targets in mathematics. Over the last year, the school has introduced a whole range of new initiatives to raise standards. Many of these are targeted at pupils with learning difficulties or those whose performance is below that of which they are capable. At least satisfactory progress is evident now throughout the school, although it is going to take some time before pupils catch up

the ground they should have covered in previous years and reach the standards of which they are capable.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The school has devoted significant attention to improving standards of behaviour and creating a safe and enjoyable climate for learning. Over the last year, the large, but rapidly diminishing, number of short-term exclusions indicates the seriousness of the school's intent. Parents, staff and pupils all agree that there has been a great improvement in all aspects of pupils' personal development. Although there are still instances of inappropriate behaviour and some pupils are not yet as positive as they could be about their work, the great majority of pupils now behave well and enjoy school. All of the pupils interviewed thought that their school was 'a great place', and they particularly enjoy the various trips, music and physical education lessons and after-school activities. Pupils are no longer afraid that they might be bullied. They are developing a sound understanding of what they need to do to adopt healthy and safe lifestyles, and they enjoy contributing in various ways to the school community. The atmosphere in the school is calm and friendly, and relationships between staff and pupils are good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In recent years, some pupils' learning has been disrupted by having a succession of different teachers. Pupils' past achievement indicates that there has been some inadequate practice and low expectations. Even though there is still some unevenness in the quality of the teaching, it is at least satisfactory throughout the school. There are also examples of good and very good teaching. Teachers manage their classes well. Many are making good use of the interactive whiteboards which have recently been installed. Much has been done to improve the way pupils' work is assessed and to analyse where there are weaknesses in their learning. As a result, teachers have a clear idea of what they need to focus on, such as the application of skills in mathematics or the development of investigative work in science. Some teachers are still not imaginative enough in the way they plan their lessons. As a result, they do not always fully engage pupils' interest or relate tasks closely enough to the needs of individual pupils. Nevertheless, the mechanisms for identifying and supporting pupils with learning difficulties are good. Many extra teaching sessions are run to meet specific needs, and these are having a good impact on pupils' learning. The school has worked diligently to build a good partnership with parents, who now feel valued and more informed and able to contribute more constructively to their children's education than before.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a much improved, satisfactory curriculum that has some good features. It is particularly strong in meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The way that teachers plan lessons is quite new but it is taking into account those things that the pupils have missed in the past. This is a factor in how the pupils are starting to make up the lost ground. New facilities and resources are being used to promote interesting and safe learning opportunities. This is particularly evident in music and information and communication technology, both of which the pupils greatly enjoy. The school also provides a good range of well organised extra-curricular clubs, and a satisfactory range of visits to places of interest.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support. This has been a key factor in creating an environment in which pupils feel secure. It has increased pupils' enjoyment of school so they can now settle down to learning. Pupils are very pleased with the recent changes and the fact that bullying or other oppressive behaviour is dealt with effectively and is not tolerated. They talk about how they now feel safe and confident at playtimes and during lessons. The school is secure and the required procedures for child protection are in place. Pupils now have a much better idea of what they need to do to improve as a result of targets which are set for them, although the targets are not always specific enough for some individuals.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has had a considerable impact on the school. As one pupil put it so clearly, "He has made everything that was wrong right." He has united the staff team into one which is working together well. He has given the school a very clear sense of direction and outlined clear and sensible plans for the school's future development which take account of the views of pupils, parents and staff. The ethos of the school has improved, and the full attention of the staff is now being directed towards improving pupils' achievement. Governors have been supportive of the headteacher and of the local educational authority's (LEA) efforts to bring improvement. They have a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to address the school weaknesses. The school's senior management team has recently been strengthened, and is helping to drive improvements. Whilst there has been demonstrable improvement in many areas over the last year, many initiatives have only recently been implemented and have not yet had time to have a full impact on pupils' achievement. The school has a good understanding of its current situation and what needs to be done. Its own judgements on different aspects of its work are somewhat more generous than those of the inspection team, reflecting the progress that has been made in recent months, rather than an objective assessment of how the

school compares with an agreed set of standards. However, with its current impetus, its good sense of teamwork and the willingness of staff to embrace change, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school. We really enjoyed the chance to meet you and to talk to you and your teachers. Those of you who have been at the school for a few years are clearly very pleased with the improvements that have been made over the last year. You feel that the school is a friendly and safe place. Many of you enjoy coming to school and participating in the activities which the school offers. We are glad that each class now has its own teacher and that you no longer have to worry about being taught by different teachers each day. We had heard that there had been real problems with behaviour in the past, but we were pleased to see that most of you behave well in lessons and around the school. There are still a few of you who could improve in this respect and who could pay better attention in class. It is clear that nearly all of you are learning new skills. Some of you have quite a lot of ground to catch up in mathematics and science. We have asked your teachers to make sure that they concentrate on these subjects to enable you to reach the standards of which you are capable. We noticed that you really enjoy some lessons, such as music, and you told us that you particularly enjoy special events and trips. You do not appear to enjoy some lessons as much, so we have asked your teachers to try to make all of your lessons interesting, enjoyable and relevant to you in order to help you make better progress. We hope that you continue to enjoy your school and that you will work together with your teachers to make the school an even better place in which to learn skills that will help you in the future.