

St Peter's Church of England Primary School, Chippenham

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126398
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	293549
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Eira Gill

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 on roll	
School	265
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	J W Smith
Headteacher	Sarah Findlay-Cobb
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2002
School address	Lord's Mead Chippenham SN14 0LL
Telephone number	01249 653537
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Peter's Church of England Primary is an average-sized primary school where most pupils come from a White British background and a very small minority speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is average overall, although in some year groups it is higher. Children's attainment on entry is broadly as expected for their age. It does, however, vary considerably from year to year. More pupils have joined the school in the last two years than would normally be expected. There have been a number of changes in leadership recently. The school works closely with St Peter's Church, which is attached to the school. It has been awarded 'Healthy School' status and has won a 'Basic Skills' award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with a strong Christian ethos. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual development is outstanding. Pupils know they are cared for well and parents are appreciative. One parent wrote, 'I am very impressed with the sensitivity and understanding that all staff have shown towards my children'.

The children get off to a good start in the Reception year and make good progress. Standards are in line with those expected for pupils' ages in Years 2 and 6, although in writing they are above average throughout the school. In mathematics, standards are not high enough. This is because the staff have been very positive in their response to the introduction of more effective methods of teaching writing to improve that aspect of literacy, but less so in ensuring progress at the higher levels in mathematics. Achievement is satisfactory. It is better than this in the mixed Years 5/6 classes, where good teaching ensures that learning is consistently maintained and pupils know what they have to do to improve their work. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In Years 1 to 4 there is a mix of some good teaching with mainly satisfactory teaching, which leads to progress that is satisfactory rather than good. Pupils have too many targets in those year groups, which they find confusing. This, coupled with inconsistent marking, is not helping them to understand clearly what it is that they need to learn next.

The curriculum provides a satisfactory basis for pupils' learning and is enriched by activities that extend the pupils' experiences and stimulate their interest and natural talents. Instrumental lessons are provided by visiting specialist music teachers and plenty of sporting opportunities are available. Pupils are developing a satisfactory range of skills to prepare them for the next stages of education and the world of work. The curriculum is adapted satisfactorily to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and for those very few pupils who are learning English as an additional language. From their various starting points, these pupils make similar progress to others.

Leadership and management are satisfactory despite the temporary arrangements and changes the school has seen. Care, support and guidance are only satisfactory because, although reliable systems are in place for the care of the pupils, some aspects of support and guidance for pupils' academic progress are not yet developed well enough. Pupils' progress is checked regularly but the way the data is presented does not give a clear indication of the progress of pupils from year to year. This does not help teachers' understanding of how their pupils are achieving in each aspect of English, mathematics and science, nor does it give them a true picture of the quality of teaching and learning. However, the commitment of most staff to improve their expertise indicates that the school's capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that all teachers have the skills to focus on improving the achievement of the pupils.
- Ensure all staff adopt a consistent approach to marking pupils' work and to setting stretching targets for pupils.
- Ensure that the data about pupils' progress from year to year provides an easily accessible record that is used to analyse more accurately the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievements and in teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. As pupils move through the school, variations in the quality of teaching result in differing rates of progress. Children make good progress in the Reception year. Assessments of the work of Year 2 pupils in 2006 for reading, writing and mathematics show that standards were above average for the first time in several years and reflect this group's better- than-average attainment on entry. Pupils in the present Year 2 classes are working at average levels in reading and mathematics but, in writing, standards are above average.

Standards at the end of Year 6 vary. Pupils who left the school in 2006 made good progress to reach above-average standards in English and science. In mathematics, progress was satisfactory and standards were average. This was because a few of the girls did not meet their expected targets at the higher levels owing to a lack of focus on their progress. However, girls are now making the progress that is expected. Standards are average in the work of the present Year 6 pupils but above average in writing. Progress is satisfactory for pupils in Years 3 and 4 but improves noticeably in the Year 5 and 6 classes because teaching and learning are considerably better.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' moral and social development is good and their spiritual development is outstanding. This is because of strong links with the church and its vicar, and the many opportunities for reflection provided by the school. Pupils' behaviour and thoughtfulness are very evident in assembly because of the strength of leadership and sense of community. Pupils naturally show reverence. Pupils' cultural development is less well developed.

Pupils behave well and enjoy their lessons, particularly when teaching is lively and well focused. Most attend regularly. Their attitudes to learning and behaviour are good. They are usually polite and show confidence and high self-esteem. As a result, they work well both independently and with each other. Pupils say they feel very safe at school and know who to go to if they have a problem. Through a range of initiatives, the pupils are very aware of the importance of eating healthily and taking physical exercise. Their contribution to the community is good and the school council say 'we feel we help to make improvements to the school'. Their idea of having a 'table of the week' has improved behaviour in the dining room. They look after younger children by being 'Playground Knights'. They act as librarians and raise money for charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall, with consistently better teaching and learning than this in Reception and in the Years 5/6 mixed-age classes. Improvements to the pupils' progress in story and factual writing are due to effective teaching strategies being implemented successfully across the school. Teachers' skills have improved particularly well in this aspect of literacy. Teaching assistants are well trained and effective. Many lessons are exciting and well taught, which ensures pupils' enjoyment and achievement. However, the quality of teaching is not consistent and there are occasions when teachers' lack of knowledge of how to organise lessons

and their low expectations of pupils' presentation of work slow down progress. Even though results in writing are above average, methods of teaching handwriting skills are inconsistent and, in a few classes, pupils' handwriting is below average for their year group. Teaching in mathematics does not always take sufficient regard of the progress made by the higher-attaining pupils. These pupils are not always given enough of a challenge. There are several different systems for target setting in place and pupils are confused. Marking is variable, ranging from very effective for pupils, for example, in Years 5/6 who know exactly what they have to do to improve their work, to merely encouraging comments used elsewhere that do not push learning forward.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A wide range of after-school activities, including opportunities for pupils to develop their musical and sporting talents, contributes significantly to the pupils' good personal development and healthy lifestyle. The recent introduction of French is improving pupils' speaking and listening skills and giving pupils opportunities to understand a different culture. Better methods of teaching writing have improved standards well throughout the school. The curriculum for science limits the pupils' first-hand experience of carrying out experiments. Effective use is made of registration periods to give pupils challenging tasks. Information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the previous inspection. The school's policy for teaching handwriting is not put into practice by some teachers. Close links with the church and the neighbouring Nursery contribute to the pupils' exceptional spiritual sense, and to good continuity of experience as children progress from the Nursery into the Reception year.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

A very Christian ethos permeates all aspects of school life and results in pupils saying they feel well looked after and happy at school. Effective systems, such as child protection procedures, are in place to ensure pupils' health, safety and welfare. Regular risk assessments are carried out. Work undertaken towards the 'Healthy School' and 'Investor in People' awards shows the school's strong commitment to providing pupils with a good quality personal, social and health education. Effective relationships with other agencies help the school to support particular groups of pupils. Good relationships between adults and pupils mean that pupils are confident to seek help. They know they will be listened to and will receive guidance. The strategies the school uses to support and guide pupils' academic progress are still early in development and the use of personal learning targets is not sufficiently rigorous.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership at all levels is satisfactory. The acting headteacher is energetic and has made innovations such as training the teaching assistants 'in house'. This has ensured they are more effective at supporting the pupils' learning. Monitoring procedures provide a satisfactory overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the school's evaluations of its effectiveness are not always as accurate as they might be and do not take enough account of the current progress of the pupils. Tracking systems are in place to gather information about pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics in each class. The systems used to

collate this information do not give a clear overview of the progress of pupils from year to year because there is a lack of rigour in how pupils' progress is monitored. The leadership does not have a complete grasp of how pupils of the same age are progressing in different classes. The governing body is better informed since the previous inspection and supports the school well. It has improved its capacity to challenge and a good example is the new committee for school improvement, which effectively involves many stakeholders, including parents.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing to say thank for welcoming us to your school. We really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you had to say interesting. You were all very polite and helpful throughout the day. I thought you would like to know what we thought about your school. We think that your school is presently satisfactory.

What we liked about the school:

- Most of you are happy at school and enjoy your lessons. You try hard, behave sensibly and are kind to each other.
- Teachers have made improvements in the way they teach you to write stories and poems as well as other types of writing. These improvements have helped you to become much better writers.
- You have a good understanding about how to keep healthy and safe.
- Your ability to think, write and talk about your feelings is really excellent.
- The staff look after you well and help you feel safe and secure.
- Best of all, you really enjoy school and work hard.

What we have asked the school to do now:

- Help teachers to understand how to make sure you get better at your work in mathematics.
- The teachers need to give you targets in English and mathematics that help you understand what you need to learn next and to check more frequently on how you are getting on so you can improve more quickly.
- The headteacher needs to make the information about your progress from class to class easier to use so that she and the teachers have a clear idea about how well you are learning.