

# St Nicholas Chantry Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109231
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	309936
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John English

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	292
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Shona Blease
<b>Headteacher</b>	Peter Treasure-Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Highdale Avenue Clevedon BS21 7LT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01275 873132
<b>Fax number</b>	01275 873132

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger-than-average school. Most of the pupils have a White British background, and the proportion eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around the national average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school. Many parents wrote to express their approval, often in quite glowing terms: 'It has become a progressive, well-rounded and dynamic environment for children to learn in,' and 'I could not be happier with St Nics, it is a very family oriented school where (my child) is extremely well looked after.' Many parents are also quite clear in ascribing this improvement to the work of the headteacher and his success in recruiting and retaining high quality, committed staff. Inspectors agree with all these opinions. The senior managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school very well and as a result provide clear direction to the staff, guiding them in ways that improve provision.

This success is seen in the improvement in standards as the pupils move through the school. Standards when pupils enter the Reception class are below expectations in most areas. By the end of Year 6, they have attained standards that are above the national averages in English and mathematics. Standards in science are not as high because the school has not developed an effective system for assessing progress in that subject. Pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, do similarly well in relation to their starting points, and overall pupils' achievement is good.

Pupils are happy at school; 'She comes out of school with a smile on her face,' said one parent. They particularly enjoy the additional activities, and show plenty of interest and enthusiasm in lessons. They feel safe at school. Several parents were concerned that there was some bullying at playtimes, and the pupils confirmed that there are occasional incidents. However, they believe that these are dealt with effectively by the teachers, and indeed as mediators feel they can also play a positive role in resolving issues. Inspectors found that the school acts correctly and promptly to ensure that inappropriate behaviour is dealt with effectively. A particularly impressive aspect of the pupils' personal development is the way they take up responsibilities around the school, acting as buddies and peer mediators. Older pupils go to exceptional lengths to care for the younger ones. Pupils also develop leadership and teamwork skills, equipping them outstandingly well for future life.

Teachers involve pupils well in learning and are responsive to their needs. Together they discuss success criteria so that pupils understand what is required of them to produce good quality work. Relations between pupils and adults are good, which helps lessons proceed in an orderly way and learning to be good. The quality of teaching is best in English and mathematics. In other subjects it varies because some subject leaders are relatively new in post and have not had sufficient impact in ensuring that good practices are consistently adopted by all teachers. The curriculum is stimulating and has been developed so that the pupils find it interesting and relevant. It enables them to develop literacy skills while working on cross-curricular topics. The pupils are well looked after, with good arrangements for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who need special levels of support. The school has developed a very good policy on providing pupils with advice on how to improve their work. Some teachers are beginning to use this well, but others have not yet implemented the same good practices.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is well led. Teaching is good and the children settle quickly into routines and make good progress throughout the Reception year in all six areas of learning. Good quality

planning provides an appropriate balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning. Effective deployment of teaching assistants and other adults ensures children receive good levels of individual attention. The good relationships with the pre-school providers and parents contribute to a smooth transition for children into the Reception classes. Use of the outdoor area is constrained by poor access and the lack of a covered area.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Standards in science by developing an effective system for assessing the levels at which pupils are working.
- Teaching and learning by ensuring that all subject leaders share the best practice in teaching their subjects with all staff.
- Academic guidance by ensuring that all teachers consistently apply the policy for giving pupils advice on how to improve.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The children enter the Foundation Stage with standards that are below national expectations, with particular weaknesses in literacy. Only in social development are they in line with expectations. They progress well so that by the time they enter Year 1 they have reached standards broadly in line with national expectations in all areas. Their progress is satisfactory in the first two years, but speeds up after that, so that by the end of Year 6, standards are above the national average in English and mathematics. Although standards in science are only average, overall standards are above average, which represents good achievement from the time the pupils started at the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as their peers.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school because they feel that their lessons are fun. 'We do lots of cool things in English, maths and science,' commented one. Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy through eating sensibly and taking exercise. They get on well with one another and with adults. They feel that staff look after them well and that the very occasional playground disputes between pupils are sorted out firmly and fairly. Behaviour in lessons is consistently good.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The older pupils in particular take on a range of responsibilities, and the buddy system is outstandingly successful. Parents of younger pupils commented on the quality of the support given to their children by older ones. Pupils also develop leadership and team skills which prepare them exceptionally well for the next stages of their education and later lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Lessons are well planned to meet the range of different needs of pupils, which ensures that they all make good progress. Teachers explain learning intentions clearly so that pupils know

what is expected of them. They use questioning well to check pupils' understanding of what they are being taught so they can go back and fill any gaps in their knowledge.

Relationships are good and teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. They make good use of interactive whiteboards and other resources to make lessons interesting and memorable for pupils. Because of the recent focus on English and mathematics, the teaching in others areas of the curriculum is not as strong, and subject leaders in those areas are only in the early stages of supporting teachers to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is enriched through a good range of extra-curricular activities, including visits and residential trips, visitors to the school, and the opportunity to learn and perform with musical instruments. There are strong links with the local church and involvement in the local community through, for example, water sports activities. Planned personal and social programmes, including a residential visit for Year 6 pupils, successfully promote pupils' self-confidence and responsibility. The curriculum is well-matched to the pupils' needs and setting arrangements for the older pupils in English and mathematics are effectively focused on raising standards. Cross-curricular links between subjects have been developed to make learning more relevant, purposeful and enjoyable, and have resulted in improvements, particularly in pupils' writing. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultures other than their own is limited; the school, for example, has no links with schools overseas.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pastoral care for pupils is good. The school has developed particularly thoughtful and successful strategies for improving pupils' behaviour and personal development. The role of the lunchtime mentor works well to support those pupils who need extra help to cope with the playground and their relationships with others. Lunchtimes are well organised to keep pupils busy and active. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported through individually planned provision, help from teaching assistants, and close liaison with parents and outside agencies. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good.

Academic guidance for pupils is generally good. The school has recently adopted a comprehensive policy designed to ensure that teachers give effective advice to pupils on how to improve. Targets for learning are well pitched and time is spent in lessons discussing pupils' progress towards them. However, the effectiveness of written advice through the marking of pupils' work varies considerably. Systems for assessing pupils' standards in literacy and numeracy are used well to identify and support any pupils at risk of underachieving.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school is well led by an established senior leadership team, supported by an effective governing body. Improvements in standards and in the pupils' personal development over the past three years have come about through the clear direction of the senior managers. Their knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is excellent, informed by perceptive analysis of the comprehensive system for tracking standards in English and mathematics. This

has enabled them to identify areas for improvement and implement plans into action. Their capacity to improve is good. Although there are some subject leaders who are relatively new to their roles, they have strong support from senior managers and good role models to follow in the experienced subject leaders. The school is well aware of the lack of an effective system for tracking progress in science and the effect of this on standards in that subject – largely a consequence of the recent intensive focus on English and mathematics. There are already plans to resolve this. The school provides well for pupils of all levels of ability as well as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

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**Annex B**

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

13 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Nicholas' Chantry School, Clevedon BS21 7LT

Thank you all for the warm way you welcomed us to your school, and especially those of you who gave up some of your playtime to talk to us. We enjoyed meeting you and finding out what you think about your work and your school. You clearly enjoy your school, and we can see why. It is a good school and it is getting better all the time. This is because the teaching is good, especially in English and mathematics, and teachers look after you well, and help you both with your work and if you have any personal worries. There are lots of interesting things to do, such as visits to places out of school and activities in the playground during lunch break. The work in lessons is interesting because increasingly teachers are using good resources, like the interactive whiteboards.

We were particularly impressed with the way many of you take a role helping others, especially the younger ones in the playground, and as buddies and on the school council, as well as outside in the community. We also thought that the way you are learning to work as the leader or a member of a group is particularly good preparation for life in the future, especially when you eventually go to work. You are growing up to be sensible, responsible young people. Your progress in lessons is good, and by the end of Year 6, pupils leave your school with standards that are above the national average, although they are not as high as they could be in science.

The school is developing its ways of helping you to know exactly what to do to improve, and we have asked the school to make sure all teachers give you similarly good advice. We also feel that while the teaching of English and mathematics is particularly good, it could be better in some of the other subjects. You can help by working hard at your science and other subjects, and bringing these up to the standard of your English and mathematics.

We wish you all the best in the future.

John English Lead inspector

13 March 2008



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John English  
Lead inspector