

# Saint Sebastian's Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110024
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wokingham Borough Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	310180
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Derek Watts

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	113
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Marion Chave-Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Colin Rouse
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 July 2003
<b>School address</b>	Nine Mile Ride Wokingham RG40 3AT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01344 772 427
<b>Fax number</b>	01344 750 697

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects: factors contributing to pupils' consistently good progress in Years 1 and 2, how well leadership and management were leading improvements in pupils' writing across the curriculum, provision, and progress in science in Years 3 to 6.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations and a scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

St Sebastian's Church of England is a much smaller than average primary school. Most pupils are from a White British background. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language and none of these are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. A significant number of pupils join or leave the school other than at the normal leaving and starting points particularly in Years 3 to 6.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Sebastian's C of E Primary is a good school. Pupils achieve well because of a good start in the Reception class, good teaching and an interesting curriculum. Effective care, guidance and support and a very positive school atmosphere lead to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being.

Leadership and management are promoting effective provision and this is leading to favourable outcomes for pupils. Leadership roles and responsibilities are effectively shared among the teachers in this small school. The senior leadership team use their range of expertise effectively and new subject leaders are developing well. As a result, all leaders make a valuable contribution to improvement. Teamwork among the staff is strong and there is a positive commitment to further growth. Performance is systematically reviewed and the findings are used well to plan for necessary improvements. Positive action has been taken to improve assessment procedures and to accelerate pupils' progress in writing. There have also been recent improvements to the provision in Reception. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance. They provide both support and constructive challenge. The school has demonstrated a good capacity to improve.

Most parents are happy with both the care and education provided for their children. Typical parental comments from the survey included, 'People feel part of a strong community', 'I am pleased with my child's progress' and 'There is a warm caring ethos'. A significant number do not believe that parents' concerns are always resolved. The school's own recent survey revealed similar findings and senior staff and governors are working to improve this.

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils. The purpose of the lessons is clear and teachers provide specific success criteria, which enables pupils to assess their own learning. Teachers use questioning effectively to challenge pupils and check their understanding. Teachers usually use assessment effectively to match activities and tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. When this happens, pupils are challenged well and make good gains in their learning. Learning maintains a good pace in most classes. However, challenge and pace are not consistently good in all classes in Years 3 to 6 and consequently pupils do not learn as much. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a valuable contribution to learning, particularly for those pupils who need extra support.

Standards by the end of Year 2 have remained well above average in reading, writing and mathematics during the past four years. Standards vary by the end of Year 6 because numbers in each year group are relatively small, which affects the results and a significant number of pupils join or leave the school from Years 3 to 6 at other than expected times. Standards in the current Year 6 are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science. School assessments and national data show that pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in reading and mathematics. Pupils are now making good progress in writing because of action taken by the school. Progress in science is satisfactory. Pupils do not always have regular opportunities to plan, carry out and report the findings of practical investigation. In some cases, there is an over reliance on worksheets which can restrict pupils' opportunities to plan investigations and produce detailed written reports of their findings.

The curriculum promotes good progress for pupils and makes a very good contribution to their personal development. While there is strong emphasis on English and mathematics, areas such as music and sport are equally important aspects of the curriculum. Good links between subjects

add meaning, relevance and enjoyment to pupils' learning. Themed weeks such as 'China week' and Egyptian Week' are good examples. Opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their writing skills to other subjects are much improved. For example, pupils in Year 4 produce clear reports of their design for a robot and create interesting news articles of well known tales. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved and is used well to support teaching and learning in a range of areas. A good range of clubs, visits and visitors enrich pupils' learning. Provision for music is a strong feature with over half of the pupils learning to play a string, a woodwind or a brass instrument.

Pastoral care is strong and there are good systems to assess and track pupils' attainment and progress. Pupils have clear individual learning targets in reading, writing and mathematics so they know what they are working on to improve. This good practice is not fully extended to science. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. All pupils thrive in the school's very positive atmosphere. They reflect on personal qualities such as compassion, kindness, patience and celebrate the achievement of others. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected by their high attendance and enthusiastic participation in all activities. Behaviour is good because of the clear expectations of staff and the positive relationships between adults and pupils. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and show an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy eating, exercising regularly and keeping safe. They thrive on the additional responsibilities given. There is a productive partnership with a school in Uganda. Pupils raise funds and send learning resources to support children's education. At St Sebastian's, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's overall attainment on entry to the school varies but is usually above that expected for their age. There have been good improvements recently to the Foundation Stage provision, particularly in the outside learning area. Good teaching and a wide range of stimulating activities enable children to make good progress in all areas of learning. The teacher and assistants provide an effective blend of adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to explore, be creative and work independently. Role-play opportunities, which are linked to the current theme, are limited. By the end of Reception, children have acquired good levels of knowledge and skills, which prepares them well for the next stage of their learning.

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

- Raise achievement in science in Years 3 to 6 by providing regular opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out practical investigations and report their findings.
- Ensure that all teaching in Years 3 to 6 is suitably challenging and that learning maintains a brisk pace.
- Take effective steps to resolve parental concerns.

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**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?	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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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

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



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

17 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Saint Sebastian's Church of England Aided Primary School, Wokingham, RG40 3AT

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and showing me your work. I enjoyed my visit and would like to tell you what I have found. Yours is a good school.

These are strengths of the school.

- Children in Reception have a good start to their education.
- You all thoroughly enjoy school and your attendance is very good.
- The school is an extremely friendly, caring and pleasant place to be.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- Teaching is good, which is why you are learning so well.
- Clear assessments and learning targets are contributing to your good progress.
- A good range of learning activities is provided for you.
- You show a clear understanding of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe.
- The school is well led and managed by senior staff.
- You show considerable care and respect for other pupils and adults.
- Staff take good care of you and give you very good support.

There are three points that would make the school even better.

- Pupil in Years 3 to 6 could be given opportunities to plan, carry out and produce reports of practical investigations so you make even more progress.
- All lessons in Years 3 to 6 should be challenging and ensure that you learn at a good pace.
- The school should take steps to sort out parental concerns.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. I wish you all the very best for the future.

With kind regards

Derek Watts

Lead Inspector