

# Norton St Philip Church of England First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123836
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	314734
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jon Palethorpe

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	60
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Karen Miles
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sharman Flindall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2004
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Church Street Norton St Philip Bath BA2 7LU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01373 834327

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<b>Age group</b>	4–9
<b>Inspection date</b>	9 October 2008
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**Fax number**

01373 834327

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average Church of England first school provides largely for pupils in the village and its surrounds, and has close links with the local church. It has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for four year olds. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Children's attainment and experience on joining Reception vary from year to year, but are often above what is expected for this age group.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This good school takes good care of its pupils, and provides a good standard of education. It has many outstanding features, particularly on the pastoral side. This is founded on good provision in the EYFS, where children make good progress and, although there are variations between year groups, often reach standards above what are normally expected. Parents have overwhelmingly positive views. 'The school has a superbly caring and nurturing environment and individual attention for each child is obviously of immense value,' is a typical comment.

Although provision in the EYFS has some accommodation limitations, the school copes very well with the situation, and children have a very good start to their education. Throughout the school, there is very effective encouragement for pupils' personal development as well as strong guidance for academic development. Personal development, including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils display a strong sense of community, in school as playground leaders and 'buddies' looking after those who may need a friend, and in the local and wider community through self-initiated fund raising.

Standards are above average and progress is good. Speaking and listening skills have been enhanced through several initiatives this year and this has had a beneficial effect on literacy standards overall. The initial stage of Somerset's Total Communication system using signs and symbols is having a positive impact for all, especially those with learning difficulties or with English as an additional language. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well, especially the interactive whiteboards, but there is insufficient development of pupils' use of computers throughout the curriculum. Effective tracking systems are used well to check on pupils' progress.

Teaching is good and the curriculum is well planned. These are both having positive effects on learning. Teachers are enthusiastic, creating enthusiastic and willing learners. Performance management is clearly linked to improving provision and raising standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Progress of higher ability pupils is successfully promoted with challenging work in class and through links with other schools.

Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation is rigorous, and the resulting school development plan accurately identifies the areas for development. The school sets challenging targets that are invariably met, and sometimes exceeded. Management at all levels provides the school with good capacity for improvement, as shown in its recent track record for standards and progress, and the improvement since the last inspection.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children achieve well and make good progress in the Foundation Stage because the provision is well led and managed. Children are helped very effectively to learn and develop through good teaching and good assessment, which match well to their needs. By the time they reach Year 1, nearly all children reach what is expected of this age group and, although there are variations between year groups, often exceed the nationally agreed learning goals. Staff work very well together, with teaching assistants making an exceptional and sensitive contribution. A carefully planned induction programme means that all children have a very happy and successful start to their education. One parent commented, 'I am very impressed by the easy transition from pre-school to school.' The balance between adult-led activities and

those chosen by the children is good. Children are making particularly good progress in learning to share and take turns. Their personal and emotional development is outstanding. Children develop into confident, articulate individuals who learn to concentrate and enjoy their work. Special care is taken of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enabling them to take a full part in the activities available. The welfare of children is well promoted, although the practical problems of managing the indoor and outdoor classrooms, with a long flight of stairs between, sometimes make this very difficult and limit children's learning.

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

- Improve access to outdoor learning facilities for the EYFS children.
- Develop the use of ICT to support learning and communication across the curriculum.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are usually above average. This builds on the good progress made in Reception. Small year groups mean that there can be considerable differences year on year in attainment on entry, and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can have a disproportionate impact on annual test results. Standards have fluctuated in recent years from well above average to slightly below average. However, where they have been lower, it is because of low starting points, and there is a consistent pattern of pupils making good progress. In 2008, pupils made good progress and reached above average standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's predictions and inspectors' findings indicate that standards are average in the current Year 2. This shows good progress as this year group has 30 per cent of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and had very low Foundation Stage entry profiles. The current Year 4 pupils have made good progress throughout the school, and are continuing in that vein this year, reaching above average standards. A very effective focus on speaking and listening skills has had a marked impact on pupils' writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early, effective intervention programmes are set up, and records confirm that these pupils make good progress. Higher ability pupils are well provided for both in school and in extra out-of-school provision, enabling them to reach the higher levels.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils really enjoy coming to school, one typical comment being, 'We come to learn, have fun, and learn how to get along with each other.' Pupils work very well together, in pairs or small groups. Their behaviour is at least good, and often outstanding. They are happy and cooperative at playtime, particularly when on the field, but the tarmac area is very cramped, which sometimes causes difficulties. Pupils have excellent relationships with, and great respect for, their teachers. 'We do lots of fun games, not just sitting around.' Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. They are genuinely accepting of, and interested in, other faiths and cultures. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, and are developing as good citizens. They willingly take on responsibility, such as older pupils being 'buddies' for younger ones. It is not surprising that attendance is above the national average. Good basic skills in literacy and numeracy are just the starting points for pupils' skills for their future economic well-being. Pupils discuss costings for school improvements, work out financial plans for parties and a

teddy bears picnic, have a weekly eco-group, and propose ideas for fund raising such as Fair Trade coffee mornings.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils learn well because teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. 'This is an excellent school with a wonderful team of committed staff', represents many parents' opinion. Assessment information is used effectively to help teachers plan lessons and keep track of how well each pupil is doing. Learning intentions are clear and a variety of activities meets the needs of all pupils. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution, sometimes working one to one, sometimes with small groups, but always in effective teamwork with the class teacher. Very effective questioning, carefully thought out to match the ability of different pupils, prompts pupils to think. Pupils are effectively involved in lessons through interesting class discussions and the use of talking partners. Discipline is rarely a problem because teachers forge positive relationships with pupils and ensure that they know what is expected of them. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are exemplary, both in and out of the classroom. They show care and consideration for their peers, with older pupils very willing to help younger ones. On just a few occasions, pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet, causing the lesson to lose its pace.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school's good curriculum is meeting the needs of all its pupils effectively. The development of literacy and numeracy skills is good and is reflected in above average standards. The school recognises the importance of speaking and listening skills, and emphasis in this area has improved writing skills. There are good links between subjects and ICT is used effectively. However, it is not always used to the full to support other subjects and there are some hardware limitations. There are good links with other schools to promote learning, for example for French, music and sporting activities. The curriculum makes learning exciting, for example through the Forest School, where pupils can safely explore in the school's own enclosed woodland. A good number of visits and visitors considerably enhance the curriculum, including a residential visit for Years 3 and 4. Personal, social and health education is well provided. The outside area for EYFS and the hard play area for all pupils are barely adequate. The outdoor learning environment in the field and Forest School provide outstanding opportunities for play and learning. The school holds the Bronze Eco-School Award, Active School Mark and Healthy School Status.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

There is a welcoming ethos based on the school's Christian heritage. Pupils and their parents quickly become part of the school family. A strong commitment to community cohesion puts the school very much at the heart of the village. Parents commented repeatedly on the school's caring nature – 'a real sense of community and a commitment to caring about others', was typical. There are strong links with the church. The extra care afforded to pupils with academic, social or medical problems is exceptional. High ability pupils, or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are quickly identified and given carefully targeted challenges. Outside agencies are used effectively to ensure that all pupils make good progress. There are robust

safeguarding procedures and risk assessment management to ensure the safety of everyone at the school. Reception year children do not miss going outside when it is raining, as they have wet weather, padded suits and wellies! Academic guidance is strong. Regular assessments are used very effectively to measure standards, judge progress and set targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good, and are having a positive impact on standards and progress. The work of the headteacher is particularly effective. She works closely with all staff and governors to identify the school's strengths and areas for development and has established strong commitment to raising standards. The small staff means that teachers have many responsibilities. This is managed sensibly, with core subjects being developed continuously, and non-core subjects on a rota basis. The headteacher has turned the small staff numbers into an advantage, with everyone being involved in the school's development. Personal development is promoted extremely well through high quality care and education. Governors are well involved and have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are supportive, but also act as critical friends identifying, for example, how to promote the school in the community. Good links are made with other providers, including pre-schools, to promote learning. The school is making a good contribution to the UK and global community cohesion by imaginative links with local residents. Much has been done to improve accommodation, but facilities for outdoor play are still too limited.



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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## 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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Norton St Philip CE First school, Norton St Philip, BA2 7LU

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school in such a friendly and courteous way. We thoroughly enjoyed being at your school, and spending some time with you.

We think that yours is a good school, with some things that are outstanding – that means very, very good. Here are some of the reasons we think that.

- You work hard and make good progress. By the time you leave the school, you reach above average standards.
- Teaching is good and everyone at the school is doing their best to help you.
- In spite of some difficulties in getting to the playground for the youngest children, teachers and teaching assistants take very good care of you, making sure that you stay safe.
- You are being helped to keep fit and healthy and to grow up as sensible people, knowing how to treat each other. You told us this and we saw how well you behaved in class and on the field.

All of these things happen because the school is well run by the headteacher, governors, teachers and teaching assistants who work together as an effective team, setting a good example for all of you. They are still working hard to make the school even better. We have asked staff and governors to see if they can make it easier for the youngest children to work both inside and outside the classroom. We would like you to have better equipment so that you can use computers more in your learning.

You can help by continuing to behave well and trying your very best.

Yours sincerely

Jon Palethorpe Lead Inspector