

St Nicholas CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125230
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315203
Inspection date	28 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Gordon Ewing

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	557
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Cubitt
Headteacher	Mrs S Vanstone
Date of previous school inspection	23 June 2003
School address	Manor Farm Avenue Shepperton TW17 9AD
Telephone number	01932 227744
Fax number	01932 254631

Age group	4-11
Inspection date	28 February 2008
Inspection number	315203

© Crown copyright 2008

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 an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues - the degree to which issues from the last inspection had been addressed, the attainment on entry to Reception and the progress made by pupils through the school, standards achieved by current cohorts of pupils, pupils' personal development, the quality of the school's systems to monitor the impact of its actions and the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in driving school improvement. Evidence was gathered from records of pupils' attainment, teachers' assessments and marking, samples of pupils' past work, observations in lessons and around the school, discussions with staff, parents, governors and pupils and an analysis of 140 responses to the parents' questionnaire. 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, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St Nicholas CE School is a larger than average primary school serving a locality with a wide range of backgrounds including some socially advantaged areas. Over four-fifths of pupils have White British heritage and only a few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is average. The number of pupils in receipt of free school meals is below average. The school is two-form entry on intake to Reception and increases to three-form entry in Year 3. The school has a significant number of national awards including Investors in People, Healthy Schools Award, Activemark Gold, Eco Schools Green Flag, Basic Skills Award and a School Achievement Award. The school is part of the Spelthorne Schools Together Federation. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Nicholas School provides every pupil with a good education, parts of which are outstanding. Pupils and parents are justly proud of their school, which is held in high regard in the locality. As one parent commented, 'I could not ask for a better school for my children.' The overwhelming majority of parents clearly agree. The school's Christian ethos is at the heart of all its actions and contributes significantly to the warm and nurturing atmosphere. Every pupil is valued and is greatly encouraged to contribute to the corporate life of the school. As one pupil highlighted, 'We all have our talents and we are treated as equals.' As a result, pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They are enthusiastic learners, their behaviour is exemplary and they achieve well.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils build on the good progress made in Reception and achieve above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They make good progress because teachers plan carefully to challenge pupils effectively and provide opportunities for them to develop key basic skills through discussion and group work. However, within this relatively strong picture overall, pupils' skills in writing are weaker. The school has rightly identified this as a key area for improvement but the impact of recently introduced initiatives is not yet clear. Standards in English, mathematics and science have remained consistently above average over a number of years reflecting the good teaching and stimulating curriculum that pupils experience. In the 2007 national test results, most pupils in Year 6 reached the expected level for their age and two fifths reached the higher level. Given their earlier attainment this reflects satisfactory progress. Current pupils in Year 6, as well as across the school, are making good progress because of the significant investment in improving teaching and assessment through extensive training and more effective planning. Teachers are now more confident in assessing learning and in setting accurate targets for groups of learners. Therefore, lessons are now more finely tuned to meet pupils' learning needs and in stretching pupils of all abilities. However, they are not, as yet, giving pupils consistent guidance on how to take the next step in their learning and opportunities are missed to develop independent learning skills. Information communication technology (ICT), a strength across the school, is used well to reinforce and extend learning. Relationships between all pupils and adults are excellent and an able team of teaching assistants contribute very effectively to the impact of teaching. Consequently, slower learning pupils make excellent progress, many becoming increasingly more independent as learners.

Pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being reflects the school's commitment to developing every pupil as an individual. They respond extremely well and thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Pupils keenly contribute to the development of the school. The effective school council was involved in the appointment of the new headteacher and has recently initiated a playground buddy system to help pupils who may be having difficulties. Pupils have actively supported the building of a new school in Mozambique and are raising funds to support a range of charities. The eco council makes an exceptional contribution to everyday life at the school and is at the forefront of developing environmentally conscious citizens. Through a range of initiatives it has greatly influenced the choices that pupils make in terms of daily diet, in reducing waste, saving energy and in adopting healthy lifestyles. A good example of this is the Golden Boot award for the 'Walk on Wednesday' project. The council is active in the wider community by calling to account the actions of local and national companies over the issue of packaging.

Procedures to safeguard and support pupils are exemplary. The staff and governors meticulously fulfil their responsibilities in ensuring that pupils are safe. Staff are regularly trained in child protection procedures and health and safety requirements are rigorously met. One parent aptly described the school as, 'a great place for children.' Both the good curriculum and the outstanding enrichment activities, that range from an impressive choice of weekly clubs to residential visits that have high attendance rates, contribute significantly to the impact of the curriculum and teaching. Consequently, pupils' personal and academic skills are further enhanced equipping them very effectively for their future adult lives.

Such success has been achieved because the new headteacher, ably supported by her senior team, has taken decisive and sustained action to address under-performance and to engender a collective spirit across the whole school. As one parent commented, 'She is supportive, innovative and has improved the school already.' For example, she promptly identified that pupils in Years 3 and 4 were not making sufficient progress and initiated swift changes to staffing and training to address these concerns, the positive impact of which is clear and sustained. In addition, a whole school initiative to improve reading has shown very good results to date. The school has ensured, by developing the governors and leaders at all levels that they are now exceptionally effective in monitoring the impact of the school's work. They precisely understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are now beginning to improve target setting and refine the tracking of pupils' progress. All issues raised at the last inspection have been fully addressed. Given the leadership's track record to date and the clear momentum for school improvement, the school has an outstanding capacity to develop further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry to Reception is broadly average though a significant number of children are below average in linking letters and sounds, calculating with numbers and writing. As a result of effective teaching, focusing on children's individual needs, by the time children leave Reception almost all achieve the early learning goals expected for their age. They have particular strengths in mathematical development and in their physical development and positive attitudes. This represents good progress overall. Excellent relationships and the provision of a secure environment are strengths. Parents support their children well and the school strives to involve them in their children's education. Teachers and support staff plan well together, rightly emphasising the development of language and mathematical skills as well as children's personal, social and emotional development. The Foundation Stage is well led and children enjoy a secure, happy and challenging start to their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing to those levels achieved in reading, mathematics and science.
- Develop greater consistency in providing pupils with guidance on how to take the next step in their learning and in developing their skills to learn independently.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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	1

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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

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?	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Nicholas CofE Primary School, Shepperton, TW17 9AD

You will remember that recently I spent a day in your school looking at how well the school is working and how well you are learning. It was a pleasure to see you enjoying your education and to listen to your views on school life.

Yours is a good school that has several particular strengths. These include:

- you are really happy, feel safe and very much enjoy coming to school
- your headteacher has brought about important changes to the school so that you make good progress through the school and achieve above average standards by the time you leave
- your behaviour is outstanding and your attendance is good
- your personal development is outstanding because all the pupils and adults at the school make a strong team and help you grow as individuals and as excellent future citizens
- you make a tremendous contribution to the life of the school through the work of your school council and eco council
- your attitudes to learning are excellent and you support each other very well
- your teachers work hard to provide good lessons that are interesting and fun
- those of you who find learning hard are very well supported in your lessons and you make excellent progress.

I have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to improve your school further by:

- helping you to improve your writing skills
- giving you regular tips and more advice on how to take the next step in your learning.

I ask you to work hard in your lessons and to continue to play your part in helping the staff and governors to make St Nicholas School an even better place to learn.

With best wishes for the future,

Gordon Ewing

Lead Inspector