

St Katharine's CE(VC) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126310
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315488
Inspection date	16 July 2008
Reporting inspector	John Horwood

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	70
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Holland
Headteacher	Donita Blackwell
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	Savernake Forest Burbage Marlborough SN8 3BG
Telephone number	01672 870492
Fax number	01672 870492

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a popular small school in a rural location, which has grown in size since the last inspection. Most pupils are of White British origin. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is low. The percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is close to the national average. Pupils are taught in three classes, each containing pupils from at least two year groups. The school has achieved a number of awards including the Healthy School Award, Silver Artsmark, Investors in People, Activemark and the Intermediate level of the International School Award.

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 school. There has been a steady improvement in pupils' achievement during the last two years. The headteacher and the governors have a clear vision for raising standards and work as a purposeful team. The quality of leadership is good and the impact on raising standards demonstrates a good capacity to improve the school. The governing body provides strong support and challenge. Almost all of the parents are very pleased with the school. One parent wrote, 'St Katharine's School is amazing. My son has made such brilliant progress. He is happy, stimulated and well looked after. The leadership is strong and all the staff are caring.'

Pupils' achievement is good. Children currently enter the Foundation Stage with skills that are close to the expected levels for their age. Pupils' progress has been slow in some year groups in the past but is now good in all classes. Standards at the end of both key stages are broadly average, representing good achievement in relation to the starting points of these year groups. There are no significant differences in the progress made over time by any group of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who move on well because of the extra support they receive to address their specific needs.

Teaching is good. Teachers ensure that there is a good pace to learning within a supportive and challenging learning environment. Assessment data are used well to set work appropriate to the need of each pupil but marking of pupils' work does not always provide sufficient guidance on how pupils can reach higher standards. There is insufficient evidence of follow-up actions when pupils make mistakes. Nevertheless, there are good features to academic guidance and pupils know their targets and talk about them with enthusiasm. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding. The current skills-based curriculum is broad and meets requirements. A good range of well-supported extra-curricular activities enriches it. It is well planned, with an effective 'curriculum map' in place to ensure that coverage of subjects meets pupils' needs this school year. Because the pupil numbers vary in each year group, the groupings of year groups are rearranged each year to avoid having classes that are too large. The current curriculum map requires revision for the class groupings that will be in place in September.

Good systems are in place to ensure the safety and care of pupils. Pastoral care is outstanding. There are good links with external agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are supported well. Pupils benefit from good links with other schools and are well supported in the transfer into secondary schools. Because the Reception children are taught in the same class as the Year 1 pupils, there is a seamless transition between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Adults provide very good support for pupils' personal development, which is outstanding. Relationships are excellent. Pupils develop very good personal qualities and feel safe and well cared for. Pupils are happy at school, and they like the good range of clubs, visits and visitors. Pupils have a very caring attitude towards each other and they have outstanding attitudes to learning.

Pupils willingly and enthusiastically take on responsibilities within school, and are very proud of everything they do. Their contribution to the community is good, with much involvement in community sport events, local charities and with church events. Great excitement existed when such a small school won a sport event. Through projects and the school's international links, they have good experiences to prepare them fully for life in a multi-cultural society. Pupils have a good understanding of what they have to do to adopt healthy lifestyles and they make sensible choices of food and sport. Rates of attendance are below average due to family holidays in term time but the school is working hard to get parents to understand how this absence

adversely affects their children's achievement. Pupils acquire good personal and academic skills which prepare them well for their next stage of education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children currently enter the Foundation Stage with skills close to expected levels. They make good progress so that they leave Reception having achieved the early learning goals. Staff interact well with pupils to reassure them and to promote their safety and well-being. Behaviour is good. Children play well, both independently and in groups. They enthusiastically undertake the range of activities provided. The curriculum is well planned for both indoor and outdoor learning. All children are included in all activities and are able to use all the equipment. This includes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Leadership and management are good. Systems to monitor the progress of children are in place and used well, ensuring that teachers have a secure knowledge of the abilities of the children when they arrive and of the progress they make. There are currently insufficient facilities for outdoor activities in poor weather, but plans to provide a covered area are at an advanced stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that marking is consistently used to provide guidance on how pupils can achieve higher standards in all subjects and that pupils' mistakes are followed up.
- Revise the curriculum map to cater fully for the year group arrangements scheduled for September.
- Work closely with parents to improve attendance and to decrease holidays in term time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The small numbers of pupils who take part in the tests each year give rise to large fluctuations in results from year to year. Rigorous assessment and tracking systems have been developed in the school which, together with the latest test results provided by the school, enable reliable judgements to be made on current performance. Past performance has also been affected by issues linked to teaching, with some classes having had several changes of teacher. The difficulties have now been resolved and all the pupils are currently making good progress. All pupils make similar progress because those who need extra help are given the necessary support. Pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 are working at broadly average standards. Current Year 6 pupils have made at least good progress. Many are achieving above average standards, having entered the key stage with standards below average and well below in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and relationships are a strength of the school. There is clear mutual respect between adults and pupils as well as among pupils. The limited cultural mix within the school means pupils are not experiencing what life is like in a multi-cultural society but project work, international links and visitors to the school compensate for this. Behaviour in lessons is good, ensuring that all pupils can learn in a safe and happy environment. Around the school, movement and play are orderly and pupils say bullying does not happen and any little squabbles are dealt with well. Pupils' enjoyment at being part of the school community is good and they really like the way they can help the

teachers without having to wait to be asked. They have a sense of responsibility for the welfare of others and this is reflected in all aspects of school life. Attendance levels are below the national average because some families take holidays during term time.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers have very good subject knowledge and lessons are lively and interesting. Teachers have outstanding relationships with the pupils, developing pupils' confidence to participate fully. Teachers are fully committed to the use of comprehensive assessment data to set each pupil challenging targets based on what they should achieve by the end of the year. In the best lessons, planning generally ensures that work is pitched at the right level for pupils to achieve well, with teachers providing challenge through carefully posed questions. The very wide range of abilities within classes of mixed age groupings sometimes limits how well the work is matched to needs. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported by teaching assistants, who also make a significant contribution to the learning of the whole class. The use of target setting is good. Pupils know their targets and proudly show how they have achieved them. Marking is often good but does not always give sufficient guidance to pupils on how to improve in order to achieve higher standards. Teachers do not always follow up pupils' mistakes or misconceptions with them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The skills-based curriculum fully meets requirements. It has been adapted to meet the range of pupils' needs within mixed age classes. This is evident in the way pupils enjoy the lessons and are making good progress. In its current form, however, it will not cater for the revised age group mix scheduled for September. Pupils who need extra help, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are given support tailored to their need. Information and communication technology is used well across the curriculum, although some pupils say they would like to be more involved with using the interactive whiteboards during lessons. The personal, social and health education provision, as well as the religious education, helps pupils develop their personal skills well. The school has a good range of extra-curricular activities which are very well supported by pupils. The curriculum is further enhanced by educational activities around the local area such as walks in the forest to learn about wildlife. Pupils, especially the more able, benefit from the school working with other schools in the area to ensure that they receive the overall provision they should.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

There is outstanding pastoral support, ensuring that pupils can develop their academic and personal skills whilst feeling safe and secure. The needs of individual pupils are at the centre of the school's work. Pupils appreciate that staff are caring and they know support is available. Careful attention is paid to health and safety, including minimising possible risks. Child protection procedures are clear. The needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are assessed and regularly reviewed to ensure effective support is provided. Pupils' achievements are assessed regularly and impressive systems to track their progress are

detailed and thorough. Target setting is used well to encourage learning but marking is not always as effective as it should be in providing academic guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and governors have developed an enthusiastic and able staff team who have made a good impact on helping pupils make good progress in both their academic and personal qualities. The headteacher provides good leadership and sets a very clear direction to raise standards. The outcomes are clear and the systems are embedded within the school. The headteacher has ensured consistently good teaching across the school which is ensuring that good progress is now made by all pupils. Governors fulfil all their legal requirements and are very active within the school. The roles and responsibilities of other teachers, for example in leading subjects, are developing steadily and the school recognises the importance of this in such activities as reviewing the curriculum map. The self-evaluation systems in the school are good and, together with the school improvement plan, demonstrate that the school is determined to move forward. Challenging targets are used and these are supported by the good tracking system.

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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 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 ¹ reached by learners	3
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	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	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

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	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 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Katharine's CE (VC) Primary School, Marlborough SN8 3BG

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed being at your school and meeting with you and your teachers, as well as talking with you during the day. Yours is a good school which has many strengths.

- You have a good headteacher and governing body who are determined to help you do well.
- You have made good progress by the time you leave school because teaching is good in all three classes.
- The school monitors your progress very well and ensures that you all get the help you need when you need it.
- There is mutual respect and trust between you and the adults.
- Many aspects of your personal development are outstanding.
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you enjoy being part of the school community.
- You enjoy the opportunities for extra-curricular activities.
- You understand the importance of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe.
- You are proud of your school and enjoy your learning.

In order to help the school improve and become even better, these are some of the things we have asked the school to do:

- always mark your work to include clear guidance about what you have to do to get better at your work and attain higher standards
- review the curriculum to suit the revised year groupings in each class scheduled for September
- work closely with your parents to improve your attendance.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by trying not to be away from school unless it is really necessary.

We wish each one of you every success and happiness in your future education.

Yours sincerely

John Horwood Lead Inspector

Annex B

17 July 2008

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John Horwood
Lead Inspector