

St Sampson's Church of England Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126317
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315491
Inspection date	19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Anthony Shield

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Viv Wise
Headteacher	Andrew Henstridge
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Bath Road Cricklade Swindon SN6 6AX
Telephone number	01793 750452
Fax number	01793 751067

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: that the progress of all pupils in writing is at least satisfactory, including that for the more able pupils; that teaching is consistently challenging in all years; and the impact of initiatives to improve writing. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation (SEF), national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies, minutes and other school documentation. Observation of the school at work, interviews with governors, members of the teaching staff and pupils, and parental questionnaires also provided evidence. 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 Sampson's Church of England Junior School serves the town of Cricklade and is slightly bigger than most junior schools. Most pupils are of White British origin. Most pupils attend the adjacent Infants school before joining the school. On entry, their attainment has been above average but has been broadly average more recently. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Although the school's effectiveness is currently satisfactory, this judgment masks the improvements that are being made and the considerable strengths in some aspects of its provision. Led by the headteacher with insight and integrity, the school is making rapid strides forward. He has set out a clear vision with a strong steer towards improving pupils' achievements while maintaining the caring and supportive ethos of the school. He is very well supported by his deputy and all staff, who share his ambition.

Teamwork and good relationships are the hallmark of the school's current drive for improvement. Staff and pupils get on exceptionally well together. Above all, this is a school to which pupils enjoy coming and are enthusiastic about learning. They speak with pride of belonging and describe the school as 'the best'. Parents are very supportive and work closely with the school in seeking the best for their children. They are particularly pleased with the improvements that are being made, the approachability of teachers and the school culture, which encourages the development of the whole child. Typical of many parental comments made to the inspector were, 'My child has flourished ...and the school has done more for his confidence and self-discipline than I ever thought possible.'

A determined approach to raising standards, particularly attainment in literacy, has characterised the school's work. Overall, standards are above average and achievement is satisfactory by the time pupils leave in Year 6. In recent years, the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in national tests taken in Year 6 in English has been lower than in mathematics and science. In particular, pupils' writing skills have not matched their potential. Past underachievement, especially in Years 3 and 4, has now been eliminated and pupils are currently making sustained progress through the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, as support is well targeted and sensitively managed. However, some pupils lack confidence in using and applying their basic skills in different contexts. In other subjects, above average standards are reached in information and communication technology (ICT), physical education and music. The two-part singing in assembly was particularly musical and joyful.

Achievement is improving because determined and successful action to tackle the legacy of underachievement has been taken. The leadership team's clear-sighted and analytical approach results in school self-evaluation which is accurate, balanced and realistic. Monitoring is regular and systematic, and analysis and evaluation are particularly sharp. Governors and subject leaders are making increasingly effective contributions to the good leadership and management overall. A commitment to improve further is evident in the energy with which all staff approach change. Given the improvements already made, the school has good capacity to improve further.

Teaching is also improving and, while some good practice exists, teaching is judged satisfactory because of its impact on progress. Typically, learning is well managed and there is a purposeful working atmosphere in classrooms. Activities are interesting and well considered and pupils themselves describe the learning as 'fun – we have bit of a laugh in lessons'! Questions are well judged and often seek to ensure pupils find the answers to problems on their own. However, support is always close to hand and pupils appreciate the extent to which teachers will go out of their way to help them. Good support from teaching assistants is used flexibly to help targeted pupils do their best. The pace of learning, which is usually good, sometimes slackens, especially when pupils are working on their own. Class targets are used effectively to set clear expectations. However, setting personal learning targets for individual pupils, based on an assessment of

where they are, is less consistent. Not all teaching is planned effectively to meet the needs of individual pupils.

With a strong emphasis on acquiring basic skills, but with a determination to educate the whole child, the curriculum is satisfactory. The school has rightly recognised the need to improve pupils' progress through developing a more systematic approach to planning skills in all subjects and that more needs to be done to ensure planning is consistently adapted to the needs of individual pupils. Some aspects are imaginatively planned, and cross-curricular links to support basic skills are firmly established. During the inspection, work on both the Tudors and healthy eating was linked effectively to the development of writing skills. Visits and visitors offer both excitement and relevance. ICT is being used with increasing confidence to support learning and there are exciting plans to develop a computer-based learning platform for pupils and parents to access activities and resources from home. Extra-curricular clubs are well supported and pupils are proud of the success of some of the school's football and cricket teams.

Pupils' friendly and confident manner reflects the importance the school places on encouraging good personal development. In lessons, pupils are keen to please and good attitudes are commonplace. They enjoy school and take part in all activities enthusiastically. The excitement of Year 5 pupils dressing up and participating with a visiting theatre company on their Tudor day was tangible. Behaviour is thoughtful and pupils have a good understanding of treating others fairly. They take their responsibilities seriously, whether as house captains or members of the school council. The school council is instrumental in making and changing school rules, rewards and sanctions. Pupils make a significant contribution to the local community through supporting local and national charities and involving themselves with town events such as the medieval street fair. Local groups such as the Cricklade Bloomers have helped pupils with the design of the school's wild-life area. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, although the school acknowledges that many pupils' awareness of living in a culturally diverse society is under-developed. Pupils have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles, and feel safe and secure in school, confident that bullying is taken seriously and will be dealt with. Through such activities as managing their own class and school council budgets, pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being.

The school's commitment to the individual child shines through, and good care, guidance and support are the heart of the school's work. Staff are vigilant in looking after pupils, and their health, safety and welfare, including child protection and safeguarding, are given high priority. Teachers use assessment data to track pupils' progress carefully and, where potential underachievement is identified, specific intervention and booster programmes are provided. Termly meetings review the progress of every pupil and ensure that there is no possibility of anyone falling behind. Performance data are used with increasing effectiveness to set challenging targets.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievements, particularly in writing, and develop their confidence in using and applying basic skills across the curriculum.
- Share good practice in lesson planning to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils and builds systematically on their prior skills, knowledge and understanding.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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?	3
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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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

20 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Sampson's Church of England Junior School, Cricklade, SN6 6AX

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed meeting and talking to you and especially liked the friendly welcome you gave me. Yours is a satisfactory and improving school and you are rightly proud to attend it.

These are the most important things to say about your school:

- You enjoy going to school and take part in lessons and clubs with enthusiasm. I especially liked meeting the Year 5 pupils dressed up in Tudor costumes!
- You get on really well with your teachers and with each other, and there is a great sense of teamwork.
- You work hard in class and teachers make your learning interesting and fun.
- You are well behaved, friendly and polite. You are growing up into sensible young people.
- The school takes very good care of you and helps you do your best.
- Your headteacher and all the staff are working successfully to make your school better.
- While most of you make satisfactory progress, I have asked the school to make sure you do even better, particularly in writing, and that you understand how to use your literacy and number skills in all subjects.
- I have also asked the teachers to plan work exactly suited to what you need, so that you can make even better progress.

Thank you once again for your help during the inspection.

With best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Tony Shield Lead inspector



20 March 2008

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