

# Figheldean St Michael's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126325
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	328483
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Deborah Zachary

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	95
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>	Pete Hutchison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jill Adams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 July 2006
<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>	High Street Salisbury SP4 8JT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01980 670268
<b>Fax number</b>	01910 671525

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Figheldean St Michael's is a small school attracting pupils from the village and surrounding area, including the town of Amesbury. Almost half the pupils come from service families, and as a result the number of pupils who join or leave the school partway through each year and across the different year groups is much higher than in most schools. Almost all pupils come from a White British background. An average proportion have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These range from moderate to severe, and include behavioural difficulties and disorders on the autistic spectrum.

The small size of the school means that pupils are taught in classes containing more than one year group. For example, some pupils from Year 1 are taught in a class with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception).

## 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. The changing population of pupils presents challenges that the school meets well. New arrivals are helped to settle quickly and the 'friendly, intimate atmosphere', as one parent described it, is maintained. The school's good leadership and management and the commitment of the staff ensure that all pupils achieve well, including new arrivals as well as those who stay in the school for the whole of their primary education.

Pupils' personal development is also good. They make a strong contribution to the school and local communities, and develop a good awareness of how people in the wider world live. The good curriculum gives them a wide range of experiences to enrich learning and prepares them well for their future lives. Behaviour is good. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe, and feel well looked after. Those in stressful circumstances, both pupils and families, receive strong support from the school.

Pupils arrive in the school with a wide range of attainment, some having previously experienced a disrupted education. They make good progress from their different starting points. Standards when pupils leave vary from year to year, but are average in the current Year 6 and were average in 2008. The school identified that standards in writing were lower than in reading and mathematics, and improving pupils' writing has been a key focus for development in 2008–9. Staff worked as a team to address the issue and a cohesive range of effective strategies for improvement have already had a big impact. Progress in writing is now good, and in some cases excellent. Pupils in one year group have made nearly two years of progress in 10 months. Such successes illustrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

Good leadership at all levels means that the staff work closely together to sustain the school's inclusive atmosphere. Governors are well organised and have a clear vision of the direction in which the school should go. Results are analysed so that the key areas for improvement are identified, and a clear schedule for the monitoring of teaching ensures that strategies for improvement are put into effect. Pupils' standards are assessed six times a year, and individuals who are dropping behind are quickly supported. However, the wealth of data is not recorded in a way that makes it easy to identify patterns in how quickly pupils are improving, whether, for example, different year groups or different ability groups have patches of slower progress. Also, suggestions for improvements in lessons do not always focus on the impact of the teaching in terms of what the pupils are actually learning.

Teaching is good, as is learning. Many of the improvements implemented as part of the writing strategy are starting to have a wider impact across the curriculum. At its best, teaching involves pupils actively, for example, through techniques such as 'talking partners' where pupils raise ideas with a friend. Occasionally, learning loses pace when the teacher is talking to pupils as a whole group, or when they are carrying out more formal work. Pupils have individual learning targets that they find useful, but these are sometimes too general to be of real help.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision is good and the children achieve well. They come from quite a wide range of pre-schools, nurseries and playgroups, but they are visited in these settings and have plenty of opportunities to experience the school on visits of their own before they start properly. This and the clear routines of the class help them to settle well. They are looked after well by teachers

and teaching assistants, who work closely together, and quickly learn to make good choices and take responsibility. During the morning session of the inspection, they suggested some good ideas about how they might take their learning forward that afternoon. Planning is very effective, with individual free play activities carefully laid out to support the main theme of each session. Pupils learn outdoors as well as indoors, using temporary shelters in light rain. Pupils' attainment is carefully tracked and, in more formal sessions, groupings within the class are well chosen to enable children's work to be carefully targeted to their needs. In learning letter sounds, for example, one group of pupils were making good progress on the sounds of letters at the start of words, while others had progressed to more complex blends of letters such as 'oa' in the middle of a word. Leadership and management are good, but, as yet, the progress of pupils as a group is not routinely analysed to identify areas where teaching or the curriculum might be improved.

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

- Fine-tune the evaluation of pupils' learning and progress, so that patterns can be identified and connections made to take achievement to the next level.
- Involve pupils more effectively in their learning, both in lessons and through more precise target setting, so that the pace of learning is consistently high.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage last year entered the school with skills and understanding that were broadly as expected for their age, although more advanced in mathematics and lower than expected in some aspects of communication, language and literacy. They made good progress overall, continuing to do well in mathematics and catching up in other areas. The current children entered with lower attainment, but have also made good progress. In Key Stage 1, pupils make very good progress. The current pupils in Year 2 have done particularly well, and have made good progress in English and excellent progress in mathematics. In Key Stage 2, the nationally produced added value data for the school is not a good guide to progress, because it includes pupils who have spent little of their education at Figheldean St Michael's. Progress in writing has significantly accelerated this year, and progress is good overall. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers in class, but very good support for those with more severe learning difficulties often enables them to make very good progress, particularly with the help of dedicated teaching assistants in withdrawal groups.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils take an active part in ensuring they stay healthy, through enthusiastic involvement in sports and activities such as 'wake and shake', and through their efforts to grow produce in the school garden. They also run a healthy tuck shop, which involves them in keeping accounts and learning about pricing. They raise money, for example, for a literacy project in Ghana, identifying closely with a school there where older pupils have pen friends. This contributes a great deal to their personal development. As one said, 'What I have learned about Ghana is that the people there are as nice as we are.' In the school itself, pupils work and play comfortably together. Pupils of all ages involve those with severe learning difficulties in play and are sensitive to each other's needs. A very small minority of parents commented on questionnaires that they

had concerns about behaviour. Pupils' attitudes were good throughout the inspection – in lessons, in assembly and in the playground – and the school has effective strategies to support the pupils who have particular behaviour-related needs. Pupils say they feel safe. During the inspection, an assembly, when the whole school came together, made a strong contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils much enjoy being in school and attendance is good.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is well planned, and teaching assistants take an active part in lessons, making a good contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers present the work clearly and in a well structured way. Questions are used well to focus pupils on what they are learning, and resources, such as magnetic letters in Reception and Year 1, are used effectively. Work done to improve the teaching of writing through the use of varied activities and plenty of talk between pupils is having a strong impact on raising the quality of pupils' vocabulary and the level of interest in what they write about. Teaching is at its best when the activities are brisk and pupils are closely involved - for example through 'hot seating' where pupils in turn are the focus of each other's questions. Occasionally, the pace drops when too much time is spent on an activity that is not working so well, and pupils lose interest. Lesson observations made by the school, including subject leaders, have identified the need to involve pupils in their learning more. Lesson objectives are starting to be shared with pupils as a step towards this.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is carefully structured on a two-year cycle to ensure the mixed-age classes benefit from a progressive programme of work. The basic curriculum is augmented by a wide range of enrichment activities, including arts weeks, a fair trade day, an environment week and lots of visits and visitors. After-school clubs covering arts, science and sport as well as gardening are enthusiastically attended. Subjects are linked well to enhance learning. For example, writing is developed in a range of contexts, and a link with history work was particularly effective during the inspection. A close focus on letters and sounds has been one of the strategies having a strong impact on improvement. As part of its clear strategy to further improve its promotion of community cohesion, the school has started to develop links with a school in France and an inner city school in England, but in contrast to the work with Ghana, these links are not yet integrated into the curriculum.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Safeguarding requirements are fully met and pupils are well cared for. They and their families are well known to staff, even though some have been in the school only a short time, and parents greatly appreciate the sensitive support their children receive, for example when a parent is on active service. The school works hard to get as much support as it can for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities from specialists in the local authority. Individual education plans for such pupils are clear and effective. Targets are well thought through and progress is closely tracked. Targets for other pupils are broadly helpful but are sometimes too

general – for example 'improve punctuation' rather than something more specific such as, 'use commas when writing lists'.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

One of the strengths of this school is the commitment to support for individuals, and this goes hand in hand with the promotion of tolerance and friendliness. Some management systems, though developing and certainly satisfactory, are not yet sufficiently refined. Nevertheless, the headteacher and staff have demonstrated the strength of leadership at all levels and the strong capacity to improve through the very effective work done to improve writing this year, and the teaching of writing. Though self-evaluation and target setting sometimes lack fine-tuning, this has partly been due to problems with electronic data storage that are now being resolved. The school is well organised; for example, the specialist teaching of music, physical education, information and communication technology, and French has been carefully arranged to allow other teachers their statutory preparation time. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is led and managed well, and lunchtime supervision is well organised. Governors demonstrate good capacity to question and act as critical friends, and set strategy. Many also contribute directly to the running of the school by helping during the day.

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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?	2
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	3
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

<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>	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
The extent to which 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

<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?	2

## 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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
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

11 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Figheldean St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Salisbury SP4 8JT

Thank you for welcoming us to your school yesterday. We enjoyed talking to you and we think you go to a good school. You are making good progress and are well taught. You know how to keep healthy and safe and you contribute well to everything that goes on, not just in the school but also in the local community. You are also enjoying the links the school has with Ghana. You told us that there is always an adult that you can go to for help and that your views and concerns are listened to.

Some of you told us that sometimes children do not behave as well as they should, but we were impressed with your politeness and listening in lessons and with the way you all play together. Keep on trying to do as well as you can!

Your headteacher and staff have done a good job helping you all to improve your writing. They want the school to get even better so we have asked them to focus on two more things:

- They already make checks on how well the school is doing, for example keeping a record of your progress so they can see if any of you need more help. We want them to record this information in a way that helps them see patterns more quickly - for example, how well whole year groups are doing in different subjects.
- We want you to become even more involved in your own learning, by having clearer targets and by being given more work that involves you actively in lessons.

All the best for the future

Yours faithfully

Deborah Zachary

Lead inspector