

# St David's Primary School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	132391
Local Authority	Service Children's Education (SCE)
Inspection number	334001
Inspection dates	7-8 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Rob McKeown HMI

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

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Type of school	Primary
School category	Ministry of Defence Maintained
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	60

Appropriate authority	Service Children's Education
Chair	Squadron Leader Jamie Cox
Headteacher	Mrs Val Cook
Date of previous school inspection	11-12 July 2006

School address	UKSU Ramstein BFPO 109
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Age group	3-11
Inspection date(s)	7-8 July 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St David's is a small school, which serves the British military community based in Ramstein in south west Germany. Many pupils have a parent who may be away from home for significant amounts of time during the year, sometimes on detachment to 'risk zones'. As fewer families are deployed to this part of Germany, the number on roll at the school is falling and continues the downward trend noted in the last inspection. Support services available to families have also been cut back.

The movement of pupils in and out of the school is high with a turnover of up to 50% each year. Pupils come into the school from a wide range of different educational experiences and systems. Currently about a fifth of the pupils attending is from mostly non-service families of different nationalities whose home language is not English. Most pupils travel to school by bus, some from villages a considerable distance away. The school is relatively isolated from other SCE primary schools in Germany.

Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and aptitudes, which generally match those expected for their age. About one in ten pupils are identified as having learning difficulties, with an increasing proportion requiring support for early literacy skills. Numbers in each year group vary and pupils are taught in mixed age classes.

St David's has recently received confirmation of its re-accreditation of the Leading Aspect Award for creating a stimulating culture of learning through its early years provision. The BECTA ICTmark was gained in November 2008 and the Artsmark silver award was achieved in May 2009. The headteacher has led the school for six years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

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## Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St David's is a good school, which has improved well since its last inspection. The quality of pupils' personal development and the care provided by staff at the school are outstanding. Another outstanding feature is the school's effectiveness in meeting the needs of the children in Early Years Foundation Stage. The school is particularly good at helping pupils settle in, feel welcomed and valued. Parents are pleased with the education the school provides and almost all the questionnaires returned to inspectors were positive. The school continues to look for ways in which to develop its provision further and demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

All pupils make good progress. Standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are above average. They are higher than they were at the time of the last inspection, when some of the more able pupils were underachieving. This is no longer the case and these pupils are achieving well. So are the small number of pupils who have learning difficulties. They receive good support and make good progress. Pupils who join the school with little or no spoken English make outstanding progress.

Pupils enjoy their time at St David's and their attendance is good. They show very good attitudes and cooperate very well in lessons; their behaviour is excellent. Pupils feel secure, free from bullying and well supported by the adults at the school. There is strong focus on pupils adopting healthy lifestyles. They eat healthy snacks at morning break and have weekly swimming in their PE programme. Relationships are excellent and pupils make a very good contribution to helping shape school improvements through the school council, the eco council and through using suggestion boxes. Pupils' understanding of sustainability and recycling is good and they enjoy growing vegetables and fruit in the school garden. They also contribute well to helping others through charity collections and by taking part in local church and community events. The many positive features of pupils' personal development stem from the excellent care, guidance and support provided by the staff.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and strongest in the classes for the youngest and oldest pupils. Lessons are successful because teachers have secure subject knowledge, activities are suitably challenging and pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Teachers make regular assessments of pupils' learning and have recently started to involve pupils more in assessing their own written work. Staff have worked hard at developing the curriculum since the last inspection and it is now good. Provision in several subjects has improved and now gives pupils a much richer learning experience. Teachers have begun to organise lessons that link learning across different subjects, although the school acknowledges that this aspect of curriculum planning could be developed further.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and leadership team work together very effectively with all staff to promote high quality care and education for all pupils. Subject leadership has improved since the last inspection and now contributes more to the monitoring and evaluation of standards and provision in curriculum subjects. However, the distribution of subject responsibilities is uneven and the way in which subjects in the curriculum are managed is ready for a review.

Governance is good. Governors take a keen interest in the success of the school and provide a suitable level of challenge and support.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage Grade: 1

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides all children with a happy and secure start to their school education. Outstanding provision contributes to the good and very good progress children make in their learning, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. Children achieve standards above those seen nationally in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. The latest teacher assessments indicate that children's knowledge and understanding of the world and of numbers for labels and counting are less strong. Staff know the children extremely well and closely monitor their progress. The quality of individual tracking information is very good and assessments are regularly shared with parents, who are given opportunities to take assessment information home.

The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is carefully structured and ensures there is a suitable balance between indoor and outdoor learning. However, the access to the outside learning area is not ideal and does not enable children to move freely between indoor and outdoor activities. Individual needs are reflected in the independent learning choices available to children. This approach contributes significantly to the progress they make. As a result, they thrive on the interesting and challenging activities that are on offer. For example, early writing skills are thoroughly enjoyed by the children as they form letters on the playground using water.

The level of care given to pupils is outstanding and children learn in a safe and secure environment. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are highly effective. The early years leader has introduced several key changes in the last year to improve assessment and planning. Teamwork among the staff is very good and contributes to effective learning across the classes. Parents are very complementary about the way their children settle quickly into school life. One parent commented: 'My child comes home every day with all her news of school, and how much she is enjoying it. For me, this says it all.'

### What the school should do to improve further

- Design, develop and manage a curriculum that successfully meets pupils' future aspirations and capabilities, and makes the most effective use of staff subject skills and management time.
- Continue to develop teachers' assessment, including involving pupils in assessing their own learning.

## Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills and aptitudes that generally match those expected for their age, although this varies from year to year. They make at least good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and most children start Year 1 having reached a good level of development in all the areas of learning. This year, the Foundation Stage profile shows that children have made outstanding progress in some areas, for example in their physical development. Almost all pupils spend no more than two or three years in the school, so measuring their progress from key stage to key stage is not usually possible. Sensibly, the school tracks the progress of all pupils through each year. These records show that in all year groups, pupils make good progress and most meet the challenging targets set for them in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Some pupils make outstanding progress and reach standards that are higher than those expected for their age. The 2009 teacher assessments for Year 2 and the test results for Year 6 continue the positive trend of improving standards, although some Year 6 pupils missed their targets in English, and in writing in particular. Pupils are doing better in the other subjects of the curriculum than they were at the time of the last inspection. For example, pupils' computer skills are stronger and their progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is good.

## Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils get on very well together and new pupils feel welcome from the moment they start, so they settle in quickly. In their personal and social education lessons, pupils have the chance to talk about their feelings and the changes they go through in growing up. Assemblies contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and have a good understanding of the importance of using the internet safely. Pupils' contribution to helping others is excellent; school council members talked proudly about their sponsorship of a child in India and their organisation of stalls for the school's summer fair. Older children accept responsibilities well for helping to manage the arrangements for assemblies. Pupils in the Year 5/6 class have worked with younger children helping them learn to use the tools they needed to make their moving models in design and technology. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education because they attain above average standards in their basic skills and the school has good systems for transferring records and information about progress. Pupils also take their learning into the community using their German language and mathematics skills to make shopping trips to the local supermarket.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good and is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy their lessons and take an active interest in all aspects of their work. Lessons are planned well and teachers use their assessments to match activities to pupils' individual needs. There are opportunities for pupils to develop their problem

solving skills and to work independently. For example in one lesson, pupils were taught the key steps and strategies required to successfully solve mathematical problems. Pupils cooperate well; in a physical education lesson, Year 3/4 pupils worked successfully in teams to make up their own games. At the start of most lessons, there are clear learning objectives shared with pupils and learning continues at a brisk pace. Pupils are also asked to consider the steps they will need to take to make their learning successful, although matching these to the learning objective is not always precise enough. Occasionally in some lessons, progress is slow because opportunities are missed to support and extend learning through using talk partners or teachers' introductions are too long. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers and provide good support for pupils' learning. Teachers' marking is regular and positive, and in many cases gives pupils sufficient guidance on how to improve their work. The school has recently started to involve pupils more in assessing their own writing and acknowledges that this requires further development.

## Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced, engages pupils' interests and is planned to match the mixed age class structure. Displays around the school illustrate the varied learning experiences that children undertake. Particular emphasis is given to developing a good understanding of staying healthy, sustainability and celebrating pupils' achievements. The development of the school garden is a particularly positive feature. Pupils report that they enjoy the large majority of their lessons, although some older pupils said that they did not find music lessons to be as interesting as other subjects. More emphasis is being given to linking learning across subjects. Currently pupils are working towards the production of a Victorian Music Hall as the culmination of their learning in subjects such as music, history and art. Since the last inspection, the school has provided more opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge and understanding of the local area. Older pupils have the chance to visit Bavaria on a residential trip and this is very popular. Pupils also learn about the host nation through visits to local places of interest and in learning to speak German. Curriculum enrichment is good and a range of well supported clubs are on offer. The library is well resourced. A librarian has been appointed recently and pupils have the opportunity to become library assistants.

## Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils at St David's receive a very high level of care and support from all staff, which makes an excellent contribution towards their outstanding personal development and well-being. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. The school works successfully with other agencies to ensure that pupils with additional needs receive good support and this contributes well to their positive achievement. There are effective systems in place for checking absences and for rewarding good attendance. Pupils report they are proud of their 100% attendance certificates and having their name on display in the entrance hall. Pupils who come to the school with little or no spoken English make excellent progress in their learning and acquisition of a new language. Academic guidance is good and target setting systems are well established. However, some of the targets set for younger pupils are not always recorded in a way that pupils understand them fully. Older pupils report that they are well supported when they are preparing to transfer to high school. A member of

staff, who also ensures that new families to the school settle in quickly and are afforded a warm welcome, manages these arrangements efficiently.

## Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's calm and purposeful style of leadership has brought about many significant and positive improvements since the last inspection. Parents comment favourably on the range of activities and the personal learning opportunities given to their children. Several improvements in provision, for example in ICT, have been introduced and this has resulted in pupils reaching higher standards. There are robust systems in place for keeping a check on pupils' progress and challenging targets are set for pupils in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Although subject leadership and management have improved, there is still variation in the quality and some inconsistency in subject leaders' action plans and their end of year subject reports.

Teamwork among staff is good and everyone works well together. The school office was managed efficiently during the inspection despite the pending appointment of a dedicated office manager. The systems for performance management are clearly defined and teaching assistants reported positively on the opportunities they have for professional development. Regular observations of lessons are undertaken to check on the quality of teaching and learning but not enough emphasis is placed on guiding improvements. The school has considered its approach to community cohesion and has drawn up a plan to extend pupils' involvement in gaining a wider understanding of diversity. However, the plan does not include enough detail about how pupils will learn about different faiths, ethnicity and cultures, and the socio economic aspects of communities. Governance is good having stepped forward since the last inspection. Governors make termly visits to the school to see it in action, and discuss and report their findings at the school governance committee meetings. They also receive detailed reports from the headteacher on developments in provision.

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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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good is 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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

## 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	1
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.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

## Personal development and well-being

How good are 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 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?	1

## 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 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



10 July 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of St David's School, Ramstein, BFPO 109

Thank you for helping Mrs Harker and me with our inspection work when we visited your school. We enjoyed the two days we spent with you. Please thank your parents for completing the questionnaires about their views of the school. We were pleased to see that almost all of them think the school is doing well. In our opinion, St David's is a good school with some outstanding features. Mrs Cook and all the staff work hard to do the best they can for all of you.

We enjoyed visiting your lessons and talking to you about your learning. Your teachers plan some interesting activities for you and we observed you working cooperatively together on these. We think it is a good idea that you are learning to speak German and are able to make visits to local places of interest. We were impressed by your excellent behaviour and with the way everyone gets on well together. It is good to know that you are learning about healthy lifestyles and having a garden in which to grow your own fruit and vegetables is a great idea. We noted that you make good progress in developing your literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The school council members told us a lot about their ideas for helping to improve things, and about how they support others. We believe that all the adults at the school care for you very well and want you to be successful.

Before we left, we asked Mrs Cook, the staff and governors to continue to work at making your school even better. We asked them to look for new ways to organise and manage the different subjects you learn. We also asked them to continue to help you check the quality of your work and help you understand how to improve it.

You have a lot to look forward to in the years ahead; I hope you do your best and continue to enjoy your learning.

With best wishes,

Rob McKeown  
Her Majesty's Inspector