

St Mary and St Giles Church of England Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110472
Local Authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	337508
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Roger Fry

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Ross Northing
Headteacher	Mr Meirion Morgan
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work and studied the school improvement plan, governing body minutes, records of pupils' progress and 88 questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how effectively the school tracks and takes steps to improve the attainment and progress of groups of pupils
- how accurate 2009/10 attainment targets are and what they indicate
- the key features of the best teaching, such as in science
- the key priorities for the school.

Information about the school

This school is of average size and draws pupils from Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes and the surrounding villages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and virtually all speak English as their first language. A small number of pupils have Asian and Caribbean backgrounds. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Their difficulties are typically in the areas of speech, language and communication.

The school has been awarded the Sport England Activemark and has National Healthy School status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The findings of the last three inspections have seen St Mary and St Giles Church of England Junior move from satisfactory to outstanding. The key to the school's success has been the way it has been led and managed. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, there is coherence in everything the school does. The staff work closely together to plan pupils' experiences, evaluate successes and decide areas for improvement. Through their careful evaluations of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' progress, teachers build successfully on pupils' prior knowledge.

Individual governors make detailed checks on the school's performance. They give highly informative reports to the full governing body, so that it is extremely well informed and able to carry out its strategic role of setting priorities successfully. The past record of improvement and the procedures in place now to manage the school demonstrate that it has an exceptional capacity to improve further. The school gives outstanding value for money.

The staff have very high expectations of themselves and of the pupils. Throughout the school pupils are polite, extremely well behaved and enjoy lessons very much. Pupils have a strong sense of community, and this shows in the positive way that they respond to their friends with special educational needs and/or disabilities. There are considerable strengths in the curriculum, such as the emphasis on two- and three-dimensional art and the exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular art, music and sports. The broad curriculum has a great appeal to pupils. They have an excellent social and moral understanding but their knowledge of different cultures in the United Kingdom is more limited. Attendance is well above average.

Pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science over the last four years has been exceptional. They make increasingly rapid progress from their starting points in Year 3. By the end of Year 6 standards are very high. Standards in science have been the best and reflect the emphasis in lessons on investigative and experimental work, which pupils find particularly interesting. There are high standards in sports and the arts that reflect the great breadth of the curriculum.

The teaching is outstanding. Teachers plan lessons carefully to capture pupils' interests and motivate them. Work is very well matched to pupils' abilities, which gives all pupils the opportunity to have success, to join in lessons fully and to enjoy their work. Relationships in classrooms are excellent. Improvements since the last inspection mean that pupils receive intensive verbal and written feedback about their work so that they can improve. Pupils understand their National Curriculum targets and know what they are aiming for.

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Links with parents and carers are good. The school provides them with an excellent range of communications about its work. Parents and carers take an active part in much that the school does but have few opportunities to participate informally in school decision making.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the opportunities parents and carers have to be involved in helping the school make important decisions by inviting them to join informal working parties.
- Develop pupils' knowledge of how people in different communities live in the United Kingdom by linking the school more closely with other schools and organisations.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Excellent learning takes place in very well-planned lessons. Achievement is outstanding and virtually all pupils asked said how much they enjoyed doing well at school. Pupils build rapidly on their prior knowledge, skills and understanding. They typically made good or better progress in the lessons observed. In literacy lessons in Year 6, pupils quickly grasped the idea of how to create a timeline of events from an information sheet, and then how to write an introduction to a piece about the royal family. They were eager to learn from each other's ideas and did so in a mature way. In Year 3, pupils soon learn what the school expects of them, such as good attention and hard work in lessons.

The academic outcomes for girls and boys are equally high. Over the four years in school, pupils reach very high standards in English, mathematics and science. Evidence from assessments at the end of Year 5 and pupils' work this year shows that Year 6 pupils are on track to reach very high standards again, and that different groups of pupils, such as those from minority ethnic backgrounds, are making similar progress to their peers.

Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic about so much of what they do. They settle to tasks quickly and listen attentively. These aspects are particularly strong among older pupils. They make the most of what school offers and work hard to meet their targets in lessons. Pupils' presentation of work is particularly good and is an improvement since the last inspection. In their questionnaires the overwhelming majority of pupils' said that they felt safe at school.

Pupils have an excellent sense of moral and social responsibility. They contribute much to the school and the local community. The school council is active and well thought of. Pupils respond well to national fund-raising drives, which reflects the school's core values and its Church of England heritage. Pupils have a less well-developed understanding of the multicultural nature of the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is outstanding. Teachers are particularly well organised, make lesson targets clear and give coherent explanations of new ideas which pupils can grasp. High standards of work are expected from all pupils. Teachers match the work to pupils' abilities effectively. This is particularly the case for older pupils when those of similar ability work together in groups. This arrangement, in part, accounts for pupils' accelerating progress. Teachers are experts at making lessons interesting, often through the creative use of information and communication technology, and responding sensitively to pupils' ideas and thoughts.

All pupils are welcomed into the school. The individual and small group support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very well organised. Pupils' needs are diagnosed accurately and the correct provision is made to help them make excellent progress. The large majority reach national standards. Teaching assistants, among others, play a vital role in this area of the school's work. They are expert, very well prepared and have the full confidence of pupils.

The school has a very broad curriculum, drawing inspiration, for example, from current affairs and the Activemark and Healthy School awards. Pupils commented how much they enjoy lessons in these areas and many others. The extensive range of after-school activities, visits and visitors is an important part of the curriculum, which pupils enjoy very much. A key outcome of the provision is pupils' developing confidence and

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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self-esteem. The care, guidance and support for all pupils are excellent. Parents commented on how much their children benefited from the well-organised arrangements for children joining and leaving the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff morale is high because of the shared management style. The school benefits from the exceptional leadership of staff with additional responsibilities. Each of the subject leaders is an expert in their field, such as the arts or physical education. The school does not attempt too many changes at once and carefully evaluates the effects of any changes. There is a clear drive for further improvement and a high degree of agreement about the school's priorities. School leaders have identified that further improvement is needed in pupils' writing and to achieve this, greater emphasis is to be placed on writing for enjoyment. Themed weeks, such as the multicultural Out of Africa project that pupils found so interesting recently, are increasingly programmed with the intention of raising standards further.

Leaders check pupils' performances rigorously. The quality of teaching and learning benefits from this close attention to detail. Equal opportunities are fully respected and pupils receive very well-targeted support according to their needs. The school commissioned an external survey to find out more about what pupils liked and disliked about writing; this information has been put to good use to help the school meet boys' needs and interests more effectively.

The governing body fulfils legal requirements and ensures that the school gives full attention to safeguarding and the welfare of pupils. It holds the school to account for its work during meetings and through formal links, such as with subject leaders, and informal visits. Aably led by the chairperson, the governing body is extremely well informed about all key aspects of school life.

Pupils benefit from the headteacher's particular resourcefulness. Through close contact with the community, use of the building raises considerable funds for the school to spend on books and equipment. Control of the budget and efficient spending of money are central to the success of the school.

The school promotes community activity well, as a result of a clear analysis of its context. Parents and carers are very pleased with what the school does for their children and the way they get on with one another. Many local groups and industries have

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positive relationships with the school and it has established good links with several schools abroad. However, parents and carers are not involved as much as they might be in helping the school come to key decisions about important areas of its work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers are positive about the school. A representative comment was, 'I am extremely happy with the school.' Parents and carers commented that the school keeps their children safe, they make good progress, they enjoy going to school and that the school is well led and managed. A small minority felt that their suggestions and concerns were not always taken into account.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary and St Giles Church of England Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 212 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	65	31	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	63	33	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	35	53	60	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	40	49	56	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	42	48	42	48	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	28	56	64	7	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	39	50	57	4	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	30	34	46	52	5	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	38	50	57	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	45	41	47	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	30	47	53	9	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	54	61	31	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	59	33	38	3	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary and St Giles Church of England Junior School, Stony Stratford, MK11 1EF

It was good to meet many of you, see you at work and to listen to your views. Special thanks go to the pupils we met for discussions and to those of you we joined in the dining room at lunchtimes. This letter is to give you a clear idea of what is in our full report.

Here are some of the best features of your school.

- You make excellent progress with your work and reach very high standards by the time you leave in Year 6.
- Your headteacher, teachers and all the staff organise the school extremely well for your benefit. Everyone has a chance to do well in lessons and clubs.
- You enjoy school very much because teachers make lessons interesting.
- You are growing up into responsible young citizens.
- You know a lot about healthy lifestyles.
- You work very hard in lessons and behave most responsibly around the site.
- Your attendance is excellent.

What we have asked the school to improve:

- the opportunities your parents have to be involved in helping the school make important decisions
- what you know about how people in different communities live in the United Kingdom.

You can help by continuing to behave so well, working hard and showing interest in your work.

We wish you all the very best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Roger Fry

Lead inspector

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