

# St Nicolas and St Mary CofE Primary School, Shoreham-by-Sea

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126049
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	340904
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Carole Skinner

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	239
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dennis Wears
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Etherton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	Eastern Avenue Shoreham-by-Sea BN43 6PE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 18 lessons, observed 10 teachers, and saw one assembly. Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a wide range of information, including the school's assessment records, safeguarding information, monitoring records and the school improvement plan. They met with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, senior leaders and other staff with responsibilities for aspects of the curriculum and the provision for pupils with additional needs. Inspectors also scrutinised 162 responses to the parents' questionnaire.

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

- to what extent leadership, management and governance have successfully embedded good and outstanding practice throughout the school that is sustaining and building upon its successes in raising attainment and accelerating pupils' progress
- how effectively target-setting, assessment and tracking procedures are being used to ensure that learning is carefully tailored to pupils' individual needs in order to promote rapid progress.

## Information about the school

This average-sized primary school provides for pupils from a wide area as its admissions policy is partly based on church attendance. It is heavily over-subscribed. Most pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The wide range of needs includes moderate and severe learning difficulties, hearing impairment and autistic spectrum disorder. The school changed its designation from First and Middle to Primary in September 2008, reducing from eight classes to seven. There have been a number of staff changes in the past 12 months. In September 2009, the school opened the 'Little Fishes' Nursery which runs each morning alongside the Reception class as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage unit. As part of its extended provision, the school offers breakfast- and after-school clubs and has recently begun to provide a lunch club for Nursery children. The school has gained a large number of awards, including Healthy School Status, Activemark, Gold Artsmark, the Silver Eco-Award and The Bishop's Commendation for the development of a distinctive Christian vision, mission and aims.

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

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

'Not only do the children receive outstanding academic education, but they are also enriched in all other areas of their lives with confidence building, character building and enormous encouragement.' So wrote one parent, whose views were echoed by many others. The school has improved rapidly since its last inspection, under the dynamic leadership of its dedicated headteacher, whose high aspirations for the pupils are shared by all staff. Governors make an exceptional contribution to the school's strategic direction and have been instrumental in responding to the needs of parents and the community, for example in establishing the Nursery. Staff, governors, pupils and parents embrace the school's distinctive aim to 'journey together, guided by God, to do the best we can'. As a result, pupils thrive in the school's exceptionally caring Christian ethos and grow into mature and confident young people.

One of the main reasons why pupils enjoy school so much is the exciting, creative and rich curriculum which promotes outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares pupils exceptionally well for their future lives. Pupils thoroughly enjoy many memorable experiences, such as themed weeks, numerous visits and visitors and innovative learning, for example through a series of visits to a local farm. Pupils feel very safe because adults provide high levels of care and support and know each pupil as an individual. The school goes the extra mile to help pupils who find learning difficult and those who are coping with challenging circumstances in their lives, for example through counselling and a 'confidence club'. Exceptional partnerships with parents, other schools and external agencies greatly enrich pupils' learning and development.

Children get off to a flying start in the Nursery and Reception, where the outstanding provision ensures that all make at least good progress. The large majority of lessons throughout the school are stimulating, well paced and challenging. Careful use of assessment information ensures that activities are mostly well matched to pupils' widely differing needs and levels of attainment. As a result, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. This has helped to maintain a steady upward trend in attainment, which, in the current Year 6, has resulted in the highest attainment for five years. All of the pupils have achieved at least the level expected of 11-year-olds and half have exceeded this in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement and exceptionally good progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school aspires to be outstanding in every aspect of its work and senior leaders and governors monitor its work rigorously. They drive improvement with determination and are developing greater leadership capacity amongst staff, following recent changes.

Subject leaders use their expertise well to modify and extend the curriculum but they are not yet sufficiently involved in checking and improving the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Although leaders have a very clear picture of each pupil's progress from term to term and year to year, the analysis of the progress data for whole year groups is not fully effective in enabling staff and governors to identify trends and highlight what needs to be done to raise achievement from good to outstanding.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the management of teaching and learning so that the proportion of good and outstanding teaching continues to grow by:
  - involving subject leaders to a greater degree in monitoring teaching and pupils' progress so that they contribute more fully to school improvement increasing the rigour and accuracy with which the progress data for year groups is analysed to pinpoint specific areas for improvement.
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### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**1**

Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding of how to keep safe, including awareness of internet safety. They say bullying is very rare and are tolerant of the very few pupils who display challenging behaviour. Pupils are ambassadors for leading healthy lifestyles and many participate in the wide range of sports and dance clubs. They grow vegetables and make healthy food choices, and older pupils are well aware of the potential dangers of smoking and drugs use. Pupils have a very strong sense of community and an excellent understanding of the diversity of national and world cultures through a wide range of links with other schools in the United Kingdom, France and Africa. Pupils have a strong voice in decision-making and make an impressive contribution to the local and wider communities, for example through art exhibitions, musical performances and participation in local 'Eco-summits', recycling schemes and monitoring power consumption. Pupils' zest for learning and enthusiasm to take part in all that the school offers is reflected in their attendance, which has been consistently high for several years.

The school has successfully eradicated the underachievement that caused attainment to decline a few years ago. Rates of progress are accelerating and are generally good and sometimes outstanding but remain satisfactory for a small minority, particularly in writing. Even when pupils learn well in lessons, their recorded work is often untidy because handwriting has only recently become a focus for improvement. Nevertheless, pupils achieve well in most lessons because they understand fully what they are expected to learn and apply themselves diligently to their tasks. They learn particularly well when activities are set in real-life contexts, as when Year 5 pupils used language very imaginatively to describe a recent farm visit. Year 1 pupils made good progress in counting in fives and tens, incorporating a 'Mexican wave' into their counting to help

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them follow the pattern. Pupils of all ages develop excellent enterprise skills, as when pupils in Years 1 and 2 planned a cake stall, costed out the cakes and used their mathematical skills to add up the cost and give change. Achievement in the arts is outstanding, as reflected in the recent award of the Gold Artsmark and the high quality work on display around the school.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

The school abounds with examples of the pupils' work that reflect the exceptional depth and variety of the curriculum. Many parents wrote in praise of aspects such as the 'rich environment for learning' and the 'wonderful school full of motivation, positivity and inspiration'. Wherever possible, teachers plan learning around events, places and situations that are meaningful and relevant to the pupils' own lives, as well as extending their horizons and enriching their appreciation of the world around them and their heritage.

Active hands-on learning extends pupils' knowledge and skills, for example through visits to museums, castles, rivers and the coast. Special events such as a food festival, science

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

week and Chinese day enrich the daily diet of carefully planned learning in English and mathematics. There is a strong focus on improving writing, which the school recognises as a relatively weaker aspect for some pupils. Teachers plan many opportunities for writing in other subjects so that pupils develop a good understanding of the purpose and features of different genres. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding, with more falling at the higher end of the spectrum than the lower. Typical lessons are challenging for all, lively and motivating. Rigorous day-to-day assessment ensures activities build progressively on pupils' prior learning. In a few lessons, progress is slower because tasks are not sufficiently fine-tuned to meet the needs of the different groups. Pupils are involved productively in assessing their own progress, and most teachers give them clear guidance about how to improve their work which they understand and follow.

High quality provision for pupils with additional learning needs and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties enables many to make exceptionally good progress and reach the standards expected by Year 6. The school works closely with families, children and external agencies to support those who are experiencing challenging circumstances. It has a good track record of nurturing pupils who may be vulnerable. Staff give excellent attention to pupils' health and well-being and to boosting their confidence and self-esteem. A wide range of extended services, including breakfast and after-school clubs, support pupils and families beyond the school day.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

Parents are fulsome in their praise of the way the school has improved under the leadership of the headteacher. He and his deputy have successfully created a strong staff team who share their vision for excellence. They provide valuable support for new and inexperienced teachers and encourage all staff to develop their skills and expertise. Action groups have been particularly effective in improving specific aspects of provision. Significant investment in information and communication technology, notably 'Moodle', the school's electronic learning platform, has raised achievement in this area. The school has become a leader of good practice in assessing pupils' progress and provides guidance for other schools. Middle managers are very effective in leading developments in the curriculum but less well equipped to influence teaching and learning, although the school has identified developing this aspect of their role as a priority.

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Governors have a clear and rigorous financial strategy and are diligent in ensuring that pupils are kept safe. Over the last few years, they have systematically rectified shortcomings in the premises and they carry out regular and thorough risk assessments. Governors and staff are well versed in child protection requirements and all adults who work with the pupils are carefully vetted. New regulations are currently being embedded into everyday practice. Promoting equality lies at the heart of the school's work and this is evident in the way all pupils benefit from the provision. The school is rapidly eliminating inconsistencies in the progress pupils make, for example by providing an alternative curriculum for pupils with specific needs. It is proactive in creating links with schools in contrasting localities, such as Tower Hamlets, Kenya, Sierra Leone and France, and takes full advantage of the many opportunities to extend its influence into the local community.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Parents are exceptionally happy with their children's experience in the Nursery and Reception. Children are happy, confident and eager to learn. They make significant gains in their learning through an exceptionally well planned mix of activities, sometimes directed by the teacher, sometimes initiated by the children themselves. The colourful and stimulating learning environment in the classrooms and outdoors provides children with a wealth of experiences that develop all areas of learning. Children make good progress in learning to read and write, and those who need more challenge join Year 1 pupils to learn sounds and letters at a more advanced level. Children are encouraged to be creative and imaginative and make use of a wide variety of interesting resources to



aid their learning. In an outstanding lesson in the Nursery, the teacher, having observed that children rarely acted out stories when playing in the puppet theatre, expertly modelled the process for them. The children listened spellbound and were skilfully prompted to suggest ideas for a story as they watched and helped to manipulate puppets.

Children show high levels of independence and curiosity and help teachers to plan their learning by offering ideas. All adults observe the children's learning and record their progress meticulously. This information is used exceptionally well to write personalised learning plans for each child, which are regularly reviewed and amended. Strong and effective leadership is founded on expert knowledge of how young children learn and develop. Senior staff and governors keep a close check on the quality of provision and outcomes, and staff, parents and children all contribute to rigorous evaluation of the setting's effectiveness. The lunchtime club for Nursery children is a fine example of how the school listens to parents and acts to meet their needs.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## **Views of parents and carers**

Questionnaires were received from the parents of just over two thirds of the pupils on roll, which is a very high response. Parents are unanimous in their agreement that they are happy with their children's experience at the school. A few expressed concerns about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection evidence shows that the vast majority of pupils behave very well and that teachers follow clear guidelines when tackling occasionally disruptive behaviour in lessons and around the school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Nicolas and St Mary C of E (Aided) Primary 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 162 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 239 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	128	79	31	19	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	126	78	36	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	85	52	72	44	3	2	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	108	67	49	30	5	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	107	66	53	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	91	56	63	39	6	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	115	71	46	28	0	0	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)	108	67	49	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	99	61	56	35	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	65	40	84	52	8	5	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	79	49	76	47	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	130	80	28	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	120	74	41	25	0	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.

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## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



16 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Nicolas and St Mary C of E Aided Primary School, Shoreham-by-Sea  
BN43 6PE

It was a great pleasure to visit your school, to observe some of your lessons and to talk to some of you about your work. We have judged your school to be outstanding and I would like to share with you the reasons why.

- You are all very enthusiastic and well motivated and you work hard in lessons. Your attendance rates are consistently high.
- You feel very safe at school because the adults take extremely good care of you.
- Teachers make learning very enjoyable for and you make good progress because the activities are planned well for different groups. Your artwork is superb!
- The curriculum is exciting and you have excellent opportunities to take part in a wide range of clubs, visits and special projects.
- Most of you behave exceptionally well, are thoughtful and considerate and take really good care of each other. You contribute extremely well to the way the school is run and have an excellent understanding of life in other countries and cultures.

Your headteacher, staff and governors are all working together to make your school outstanding in every respect. In order to help you all make even faster progress, we have asked them to make sure that more of the teachers are involved in observing lessons in different subjects so that they can help each other to improve. We have also recommended that the senior leaders analyse very carefully the progress you all make in each year group and use this information more rigorously to pinpoint areas for development.

You can help your teachers to make all aspects of the school outstanding by always giving your very best effort. We wish you continuing success.

Yours sincerely

Carole Skinner

Lead Inspector

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