

# Oliver Tomkins Church of England Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126443
<b>Local Authority</b>	Swindon
<b>Inspection number</b>	340980
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Hazel Callaghan

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>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	192
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sue Green
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Rhian Cockwell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Beaumaris Road Toothill Swindon SN5 8LW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, three support group sessions and two school assemblies, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' work, teachers' planning, the school development plan, governors' minutes and the school records of pupils' attainment and progress. Twenty-three parent questionnaires were scrutinised.

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

- how well pupils make progress, especially the boys in language in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, and those pupils with additional needs and those new to learning English
- how pupils are helped to understand how to improve their work
- how governors and leaders at all levels have settled to their new responsibilities and how they continue to move the school forward.

## Information about the school

Oliver Tomkins Church of England Infant School provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes, and for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Most children come from families of White British backgrounds but there are also children from a number of different minority ethnic groups. A small but an increasing number of children do not have English as their home language and a few of them are in the very early stages of learning English. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is smaller than that found nationally. There have been several changes in the teaching staff this term. The school has successfully achieved the Basic Skills Award, Healthy Schools Award and Artsmark Silver Award. A privately run breakfast club and after-school club are held on school premises.

**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?**

**2**

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

**2**

### Main findings

Oliver Tomkins Church of England Infant School provides a good education for its pupils who consequently make good progress in their academic and personal development. The school's work is securely underpinned by its strong religious character which ensures pupils feel well cared for and an important part of the school community. Staff are very successful in enabling pupils to reflect on a wide range of issues and to develop strong moral values for their age. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is consequently excellent, and is clearly evident in strong relationships throughout the school.

The school is led very well by the headteacher whose drive and ambition for every child is reflected in the commitment of all the staff and their good team work. Parents who returned their questionnaire were unanimous in their support for the school and the comment of one parent was typical of most: 'the headteacher leads a great team!' Teaching is good throughout the school, the curriculum meets the learning needs of pupils successfully, and consequently they achieve well and reach standards that are usually above the national average. Attainment in mathematics is usually the strongest aspect of pupils' work, along with reading. Attainment in writing is broadly average because progress in writing is slower than in other areas. Children make a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes and make good progress in their learning, but staff have identified that children are less successful in developing early writing skills than in other areas. The school has introduced a wide range of strategies to enable pupils to be as successful in writing. Although standards are improving, the full impact has yet to be seen. The most able pupils through the school are effectively challenged, so they reach the higher than expected standards. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are new to speaking English are well supported, so all make good progress in most areas of their work. The pupils of average ability get less focused attention and although making satisfactory progress they do not achieve as well as their peers.

Procedures for monitoring the school's work are very thorough and rigorous and the headteacher is accurate in her evaluation of its strengths and areas of weakness. The school development plan is testimony to the clear view of what can be further developed and focuses on the different ways writing can be improved, such as the need to provide even more opportunities to write in a range of activities. This term there have been a few new members of staff with the result that changes have been made in the distribution of management responsibilities. Changes to the senior leadership team are very new and no formal procedures have yet been put into place to ensure the new balance of roles and responsibilities is working effectively. The school's positive track

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record of improvements, however, such as improvements to the assessment systems in the Early Years Foundation Stage, the development of a creative curriculum that is relevant to the pupils' interests and inspires their eagerness to learn, the continuing outstanding quality of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development and the clear direction from the headteacher are all evidence of the school's good capacity to improve.

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

- Raise standards in writing by:
  - ensuring that average ability pupils make as much progress as other pupils in the class
  - providing more opportunities for children to write in the outside area of the Nursery and Reception classrooms
  - developing a wide range of opportunities to extend pupils' reading and writing skills in other subjects.
- Developing systems by which the effectiveness of the new management structure can be evaluated.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Children's good learning starts in the Nursery and continues through Reception and on up through Years 1 and 2. Children enjoy their learning and their eagerness to show what they know is evident in many lessons. The buzz of excited discussions in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, for example, as pupils shared their knowledge of the numbers that together make 10 was only equalled by each groups' excitement about the sale in the toy shop that required them to find new prices for the toys. The activities were well matched to pupils' abilities but challenged their thinking as they made the required discounts and then recorded the calculation.

Current good progress and standards of work above that expected for pupils' ages show that the school has returned to the above average attainment seen in 2007 and in 2008 national tests. Last year the cohort had a group of pupils with significant behavioural difficulties which affected their learning and there was a decline in attainment. Some disruption in the teaching of one of the classes also slowed pupils' progress but these difficulties are in the past. School records of pupils' progress show that the vast majority of pupils are making good progress and standards are once more on the rise. Teachers' expectations are high, and the more able pupils respond well to the challenges provided in all areas of the curriculum. Children of all ages work well together, sharing ideas and solving problems. Pupils in the early stages of learning English are well supported, their activities build effectively on the vocabulary and skills already acquired and they play a full part in the lessons. They make good progress.

Pupils' personal development is also good. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils' have a sensible awareness of the potential dangers around them and

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have a good range of strategies to keep themselves safe. They are aware of the need for healthy lifestyles and how to promote them but are not always in a position at home to make healthy eating choices. They make a positive contribution to the life of the school through their enjoyment of acting as monitors, as play leaders or as school councillors. Pupils work well together and have a strong sense of right and wrong. They all get on very well and have a good understanding of the differences of cultures through their relationships with children in the school and through their lessons on countries such as Kenya. Most pupils attend regularly but some are regular absentees and the school is working with their families to improve the situation. Pupils' good attitudes to learning and their successful application of basic literacy, numeracy and computer skills prepare them well for their next stage in education.

*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	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

The curriculum has been effectively adapted to meet pupils' academic needs and provides a strong basis for their personal development. It also stimulates their interest and enjoyment of learning. In a lesson in Year 2, for example, pupils were finding out

<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.

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about the Fire of London. They had already decided on what they wanted to find out about while looking closely at a dramatic picture of the fire at its height. Pupils' empathy was clearly evident as they wanted to know about the people in the houses and whether they were hurt and what happened to the horse in the picture. This led them to show mature research skills for their ages as they read carefully the different books and pictures provided for them to answer their questions. The staff have already achieved much in the development of this stimulating and creative curriculum where subjects are linked together in meaningful ways in order to excite pupils' interest and desire to learn. They recognise, however, that more can be done to inspire pupils to write and this is part of the school's focus for improvement.

Pupils say their teachers help them to learn and they understand how to get better in their work. This is because teachers are very effective in making it clear not only what is to be learnt but also how to be successful. Information from the assessment of pupils' work is used well not only to plan the next activities but also to set targets for the next stage of pupils' learning. There are clear expectations. Teaching assistants play an important part in supporting pupils in their activities. This is usually the lower ability group and those pupils new to learning English. Effective questioning as well as encouragement and support provide a positive mix which helps pupils succeed. Good attention is also given to the average ability pupils, but it is not always as well focused or as challenging as that for the most able.

The care, support and guidance for all pupils is good and this significantly supports pupils' progress. It is often outstanding in the school's response to pupils with specific difficulties and in respect of child protection. The school makes very good use of outside agencies to support the child and the family when necessary. Pupils with significant personal, emotional and behavioural difficulties are well supported and this has led to many being able to overcome the barriers that stand in the way of their effective learning. Those pupils with learning difficulties caused by low self-esteem or poor social skills are supported well, not only in the classroom but also in the nurture room where sessions help to build confidence in their own abilities and to enable them to work and play happily with others. The school works hard to encourage parents to send their children to school not only regularly but also on time. This works well in the main but there are a few families who have been contacted by the education welfare officer to ensure that their children attend more regularly.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's personal leadership is strong and she has built an effective team, who together ensure that the school runs really effectively from day to day. The school has functioned very smoothly during the headteacher's recent absence, under the leadership of the new deputy headteacher who successfully prepared and supported the staff in readiness for the inspection. The senior leadership team is made up of other experienced and competent members of staff but several are new to their roles, and some of the responsibilities for aspects of leadership and management have been reallocated to meet the changing needs of the school. All appears to be working smoothly, but it is still too soon to see an impact of these changes and the extent to which staff respond to the greater expectations for their involvement in monitoring pupils' attainment and progress. Systems for monitoring teaching, learning and pupils' progress are well embedded and evaluations are both thorough and rigorous, providing senior staff with a clear view of the school's strengths and areas in need of further development.

The school is a harmonious community where there are no concerns about either discrimination or bullying. Pupils of all minority ethnic groups achieve well. The school has effectively carried out an audit of its provision for community cohesion. The school recognises that, although it has a diverse community, more opportunities could be made for children to experience the even greater cultural diversity in schools not very far away, as well as extending their international links. Partnership with parents is good and the school tries hard to make positive contacts with those families who are hard to reach. Good links have also been made with a wide variety of other agencies and individuals who have extended or supported the school's work. The school has worked closely with local residents and council groups, for example, to develop the school travel plan.

The staff are well supported by the governing body, but the number of governors is depleted following several recent resignations and new governors need to be recruited to ensure that there are sufficient representatives trained in child protection and health and safety. There is expertise already on the staff and governors to ensure that all the requirements are met. All safeguarding policies and procedures are effective and at the time of the inspection were carried out well.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>



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<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in the Nursery with a much narrower range of personal and social skills and language development than is usually found. They settle into Nursery routines really well under the sensitive care of the teacher and staff. Children make good progress in the Nursery and are prepared well for learning by the time they move into Reception. Good teaching and an exciting range of activities enable children to continue to develop well and, by the time they move into Year 1, a significant majority have reached the standards expected. In both the Nursery and Reception classes there is a good balance of adult-led tasks and opportunities for children to choose and develop their own activities. They choose their resources with confidence and most work and play very happily with the other children, sharing resources and toys sensibly. Teaching is good and all adults support the children effectively so their skills and knowledge develop. The outside area has been developed satisfactorily but rightly more is planned, so that children have more opportunities to experiment and explore their ideas. For example, at present there are too few reasons for children to choose to write outside.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children are very well cared for and looked after. Good links with parents are made early on and these good lines of communication are encouraged by all the staff. Children's progress is monitored carefully. The headteacher and senior staff identified that in the past assessments were not sufficiently accurate and this has been addressed. The new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the staff work well as an effective team, planning together and looking for further ways to develop the provision.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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## **Views of parents and carers**

Only 23 questionnaires were returned by parents but all were positive and very supportive of the school. Those parents who made written comments expressed their pleasure at the good levels of progress made by their children and that pupils were happy at school. Several commented on the strong leadership of the headteacher and the great team of staff who were supportive and very approachable.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Oliver Tomkins Church of England Infant 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 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 192 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	91	2	9	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	87	3	13	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	12	52	10	43	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	65	8	35	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	65	8	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	48	12	52	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	78	5	22	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)	13	57	10	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	57	10	43	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	65	8	35	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	61	8	35	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	65	8	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	78	5	22	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 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"> <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.**



27 November 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Oliver Tomkins Church of England Infant School, Swindon, SN5 8LW

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents are correct in thinking that you go to a good school. Here are some of the things we found out about you.

- You get a good start to your schooling in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- You make good progress, especially in mathematics, and you reach standards that are better than most pupils of your age.
- You want to do well and enjoy the exciting activities you are given.
- You are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone. You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves safe.
- You can be exceptionally thoughtful and show care for each other and respect for each other's feelings.
- You are taught well and all your teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are fun and you have a good understanding of how you can get better in your work.
- The headteacher and senior staff provide strong leadership for the school and the staff all want you to do very well.
- Everyone in the school works together as a strong team
- The staff look after you very well so you feel safe and happy.

Even though Oliver Tomkins Church of England Infant School is a good school, there are some things that it can do to make it even better. We have asked the headteacher and governors to:

- help all of you make good progress in your writing
- find ways to check if all the new ways of leading the school are working as well as possible.

Thank you again for helping us and remember you can do your bit by continuing to work hard.

Best wishes

Yours sincerely

Mrs Callaghan

Lead Inspector

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