

# Bemerton St John CE Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126434
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	342810
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kevin Hodge

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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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>	162
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Natalie Moss
<b>Headteacher</b>	Estelle Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	Lower Road Bemerton Salisbury SP2 9NW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Around two thirds of inspectors' time was spent looking at learning. Inspectors saw all seven teachers, teaching either whole classes or smaller groups of pupils. In all, 12 lessons were observed. Brief meetings were held with a small number of parents and groups of pupils. Inspectors also held meetings with four governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body, senior staff and a local authority adviser. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's action plan, development plan and various policies. Inspectors also looked at the outcomes of a recent small survey of parents' views.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following which were the issues from the previous report:

- the quality of teaching, particularly for more-able pupils
- how far the quality of safeguarding, including checks on staff appointments, meets legal requirements
- how effectively the school is led and managed, including the way governors support the school
- how well the school engages with parents and carers.

## Information about the school

When the school was inspected in January 2009 it was judged to require special measures. The school's progress was monitored regularly and at the last monitoring inspection in November 2009, it was judged to be making satisfactory progress in tackling the weaknesses identified above. The school is smaller than average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is around average, includes those with behavioural and severe physical disabilities. Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in one reception class. Since the last inspection the school has been led by a local authority advisory headteacher, supported until December 2009 by a headteacher from a nearby school. The advisory headteacher was recently appointed to become the school's new headteacher from next September and will continue to lead the school until then.

**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?**

**3**

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

**3**

### Main findings

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Bemerton St John has improved during the past year and is providing a satisfactory quality of education for all pupils. The growing confidence of staff and parents and carers in the school's recent achievements and in the rising expectation that the school can do even better is well founded. This is reflected most in the way that the school has been led and managed and the good levels of personal development and care promoted. This ensures pupils enjoy school and feel safe and well supported. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Progress is sometimes good, but more consistently so in Years 1 and 2 than in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6. In some lessons, the pace of learning is not maintained at a good level throughout. A majority of pupils reaching the level expected for their age and some doing even better than this. While overall attainment at the end of Year 6 is average, it varies between subjects. For example, pupils' standards in mathematics are not as high as in their English and science work. This is because activities are less consistently effective in mathematics at being relevant to pupils' interests and at challenging their thinking.

Pupils' good behaviour is a strength of the school. This reflects the strong and positive relationship between adults and pupils and the support and care that pupils give each other. Pupils have a really good sense of right and wrong and are polite, mature and welcoming to visitors. While they know their own locality well, they are not sufficiently aware of those people with contrasting views, beliefs or backgrounds represented in other parts of the United Kingdom or beyond. Although teaching has improved considerably in recent months, and was good in the some of the lessons taught, there has not yet been sufficient time for this to bring about consistently good learning and progress, which is why teaching is satisfactory overall. Nevertheless significant weaknesses have been eliminated. All teachers use assessment increasingly well to support the pupils' learning. This is why in recent months pupils' rates of progress are increasing.

The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. There has been a successful focus on eliminating inadequacies in provision, for example improving the quality of teaching and learning, and in ensuring safeguarding arrangements are good. This has aided the pupils' sense of security and well-being. The advisory headteacher is held in high regard by parents and carers, who welcomed her appointment as the new headteacher. Supported by senior staff, the advisory headteacher successfully led the drive to use self-evaluation more accurately to secure better outcomes for pupils. The school's capacity is not yet good, mainly because senior leaders and subject leaders are still

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developing their roles in shaping the strategic direction of the school. The school's priorities are clear and realistic and governors are increasingly holding the school to account for its performance.

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

- Raise the proportion of pupils making good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6 by:
  - ensuring that staff in the Reception class plan, guide and extend children's learning in their activities more effectively
  - ensuring that activities in mathematics are relevant to pupils' interests and challenge their thinking
  - the curriculum is planned effectively to use basic skills in different subjects or topics.
- Increase the amount of good teaching found in the school by:
  - making sure that a quick pace of pupils' learning is maintained in lessons
  - activities are planned which really stretch the most-able pupils
  - reducing the time teachers and pupils spend explaining or discussing activities so pupils complete more work in the time available.
- Improve the school's promotion of community cohesion by:
  - implementing the findings of its recent audit on this aspect of its work
  - developing contacts with schools in the United Kingdom and beyond
  - seeking to exchange simple information about the school, its pupils and the area it serves with schools in contrasting settings.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils' attainment by end of Year 6 is at least average and some pupils achieve even better than this, but the school has yet to show that this rising trend is fully embedded and sustained. Pupils' learning and progress in lessons are generally satisfactory and good in some year groups. For example, in a lesson based around work on rainforests in Year 2, pupils really enjoyed learning the names of parts of the rainforest before making their own simple models of trees. In Year 6 pupils, aided by some outstanding teaching, performed at their very best in an English lesson when they developed their knowledge of how to present arguments in convincing ways. There is no significant difference in the outcomes for different groups of pupils, although sometimes opportunities are missed to really stretch the learning of most-able pupils. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and boys and girls all make similar rates of progress and are achieving at least satisfactorily.

Owing to the particularly good levels of spiritual, social and moral development, pupils really enjoy their time in school and are very happy. Pupils have confidence in the adults

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with whom they work and feel very safe and secure. Many pupils make a positive choice to eat healthily and most take regular exercise. Pupils respond sensibly and well when given responsibility; for example, well-trained playground leaders help supervise younger children during break and lunchtimes. Their fund-raising efforts for the recent disaster in Haiti reflect their caring nature. Pupils' academic achievements and positive attitudes make a satisfactory contribution to their future economic well-being, although their knowledge of the world of work, including gaining simple entrepreneurial skills, is not as well developed.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

One of the strong features of lessons is the real sense of enjoyment and positive relationships between pupils and adults. This aids pupils' motivation and willingness to learn. Improvements in teachers' planning and the use of assessment, including simple target-setting, to support learning are two of the key reasons why outcomes for pupils are improving. Pupils' work is usually matched carefully to their different learning needs, although not always sufficiently for the most-able pupils. 'Lessons are fun', said one

<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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pupil. In Year 3 and 4, pupils particularly enjoyed quizzing classmates acting as Henry VIII. However, in some activities in Years 3 to 6, pupils become restless as explanations by the teacher are too long or overly complicated. A good range of after-school sport clubs are well attended by pupils. While the curriculum meets most pupils' needs, some literacy and numeracy skills are not always used creatively in other subjects to enthuse pupils' learning, to challenge their thinking or to allow them to apply their skills. The good care and guidance the school provides helps pupils feel secure and parents' and carers' comments to inspectors echoed this positive aspect. Pastoral care is particularly effective and vulnerable pupils are well supported. Parents and carers rightly point to the help that they and their children receive. The 'open approach' of the school fosters good levels of dialogue between home and school. Pupils' feel confident in joining their new schools in September due to the good transition arrangements and also because they have already visited them to take part in activities to extend their learning and experiences.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The clear direction set by the headteacher since she took over the acting leadership of the school has been a consistent feature in helping to raise the expectations of all staff. This has had particular effect in ensuring that safeguarding routines and checks, including vetting procedures for staff, are of good quality. It has also been instrumental in bringing about the school's much-improved engagement with parents and carers, who are extremely appreciative of the open dialogue between themselves and staff. Senior and middle leaders are more involved in shaping the strategic direction of the school. However, checks on teaching, while improving, are not yet systematic enough to bring about the most rapid improvement. Governors know the school increasingly well, as their routines for visiting and monitoring are more regular and better focused. Governors and staff ensure that discrimination is not tolerated and that pupils have equal opportunities. To ensure this, the increasingly good use of information about pupils' progress helps spot those groups and classes needing extra support. The school's promotion of community cohesion within the school and the local community is good. However, community cohesion is satisfactory overall because the links and interactions with others beyond the immediate community, for example in sharing information with schools where pupils' experience of life is different, are not sufficiently well developed.

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This means that pupils do not gain a wide perspective on the variety of communities represented in the United Kingdom and beyond.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Reception class provides a welcoming, safe and secure learning environment. The children make satisfactory progress, given their starting points which are those typically expected. Most enter Year 1 with skills broadly at the level expected for their age. Children grow in confidence and are able to make choices and share responsibility for decisions. They really enjoy role play and also practical activities, such as making daffodils for St David's Day. The quality of provision has improved, although staff do not always sufficiently help children extend their learning in activities, particularly when they work in smaller groups in the class or outside. For example, the story of 'Red Riding Hood' enthused some children and helped develop their knowledge of letter sounds and the alphabet. However, some children then spent too long pursuing activities independently that did not really extend their learning. Careful observations are used to inform children's 'learning journals', which are useful and informative. The welfare procedures are particularly good and all children are made to feel included in activities. The outdoor activity area is restricted for space, although temporary use of the playground in lesson time helps pupils have more room. However, the resources are not very enticing for the children as much equipment is worn and in need of upgrading.



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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Although no formal questionnaire was circulated before the inspection, the school's own survey indicates that parents and carers are very supportive of the changes that have taken place recently. They particularly like the 'open door' approach of the headteacher and staff. Comments to the inspector, gained from this and two previous monitoring visits, were very positive. The fact that parents' views are taken much more seriously is welcomed by them. All comments pointed to the children's enjoyment of being at the school.

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

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

## 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.**



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3 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bemerton St John CE Aided School, Salisbury, SP2 9NW

Many thanks for making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. It has been good to get to know you and the staff. I am glad to tell you that the school is satisfactory and no longer needs me to come along to see how things are improving.

Here are some of the main things we found out.

- Mrs Smith and the staff have worked hard to get the school out of needing 'special measures'.
- You reach the expected standards when you leave, and you achieve satisfactorily in most aspects of your work.
- You behave well and try hard in lessons.
- You all said you feel really safe as the school cares for you well.
- You help each other a lot in school and know about others who live nearby.
- The school helps those of you who sometimes find work difficult or need extra support to achieve as well as your classmates.
- The staff and governors work hard to ensure your safety.
- Your parents and carers feel much more a part of what goes on in the school and appreciate that they can give their views to the school.

We have asked the school to do three things to help it improve further. We want the headteacher, governors and staff to:

- make sure that the reception children and those in Years 3 to 6 keep learning quickly and consistently well in all lessons
- make teaching as good as possible in all classes
- help you learn about others from different places and cultures much further away from the school.

You can help your school to become even better by trying your best in lessons and in keeping up your good behaviour around the school.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Hodge

Lead inspector

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