

Figheldean St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	126325
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	381213
Inspection dates	29 February – 1 March 2012
Lead inspector	Rowena Onions

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Tunncliffe
Headteacher	Jill Adams
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Rowena Onions

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Eight lessons were seen and four teachers and some teaching assistants were observed. Meetings were held with pupils, governors and staff. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at data about pupils' progress. In addition, she considered the school improvement plan, reports from the local authority and a range of other documentation. Fifty-five responses to the parents' and carers' questionnaire were received and analysed, together with responses from 37 pupils and 11 staff.

Information about the school

This much smaller-than-average-sized primary school serves its local area including local military bases and a number of pupils travel to the school daily from further afield. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. An average percentage of pupils are disabled or have a wide range of special educational needs although more have statements of special educational needs than is usually the case. Pupils' special educational needs include physical disability, speech, language and communication, moderate learning, behaviour, emotional and social, and profound and multiple learning difficulties. The number of pupils who enter or leave the school at other than normal transition times is well above average and a number of these have attended more than one school prior to arriving at St Michael's. Half of the pupils have parents or carers who are members of the armed forces. Children, including those in the Reception Year, are taught in classes covering two age groups. In 2011, the school did not meet the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well and gain skills and knowledge that prepare them well for the next stage of their education. The school is not outstanding because some inconsistencies in teaching remain and data are not used as smartly as they could be to ensure that all groups of pupils make equally good progress and to identify any potential underachievement at an early stage.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Staff are particularly good at helping the large number of pupils who enter the school at unusual times to settle well and make good progress. There is good support for pupils from service backgrounds and these pupils also achieve well.
- Pupils are well taught. Teachers ensure that pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn and, in general, pupils work hard to meet this expectation. Lessons are successfully designed to interest pupils. Although pupils complete good amounts of work, there are occasions in lessons when time is not used to maximum effect. Developments to ensure pupils know how to improve their work are being successful. However the quality of marking remains inconsistent and is rightly the focus of further school improvement work.
- Overall, pupils behave well in class and around the school. The safety and well-being of pupils are given high priority and this is successful in ensuring that pupils feel, and are, safe in school.
- There is a clear shared commitment among staff and governors to ensuring that the school provides well for each individual pupil. The headteacher provides a clear vision and direction for the school. Performance management is used well to drive up the quality of teaching. Data are used well to ensure that individual pupils are making at least expected progress but the way that the data are being managed at a whole-school level is too complex and time consuming to provide easily accessed information about the performance of different groups.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching enables pupils to achieve as well as possible by:
 - making the most effective use of time in all lessons
 - ensuring that the quality of all marking meets that of the best and that pupils are given regular opportunities to act on the advice given.
- Improve the way data are managed to ensure they provide easily accessed information for school leaders and governors about the progress of individuals and groups of pupils and to identify potential underachievement at an early stage.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children in the Reception Year successfully build on their starting points so that by the end of the year, most attain the goals expected of them. The progress they make in learning to learn is of particular note. Children become self-motivated for example, as when they independently chose to follow up a whole-class mathematics session by throwing bean bags into number circles and writing their scores on a blackboard. This good progress continues as pupils move through the school.

The high number of pupils who leave and join the school each term and the small number in each year group make the use of national data to evaluate pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 problematic and attainment can vary widely from year to year. As a result, in one particularly small and complex year group pupils' attainment fell below government floor standards. The trend, however, over recent years has been for the school to exceed these floor standards with attainment in reading, writing and mathematics securely at, or above, the national average. Current Year 6 pupils are attaining as expected, and are on track to attain above average standards in all these subjects. However, school data and pupils' books show that, given their starting points, pupils progress well during their time in the school.

The great majority of pupils are well motivated and so learn well in class. In a lesson about probability, for example, Years 5 and 6 pupils were keen to complete initial activities in order to move on to more complex problems. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported to make good progress. This effective support is a key factor in the strong progress some with more complex difficulties make.

Good attention is given to ensuring that pupils gain skills in reading, writing, mathematics and information and communication technology which they can apply to their work in other subjects. The present school focus on the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is paying dividends and most older pupils have a good level of skills which enables them to, for example, discuss their work and what

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they are learning. Early reading is taught well so that by Year 2, pupils are able to use a range of skills to help them read simple texts fluently, as well as with enjoyment and understanding. By Year 6, pupils are able to use reading to help them research in other subjects. Regular opportunities to read successfully encourage them to enjoy reading a wide range of books and other texts. Parents and carers agree their children are making good progress and pupils are confident they are helped to improve steadily.

Quality of teaching

The vast majority of parents and carers believe that teaching is good and inspection evidence supports that view. Teachers' use of data to ensure that there are objectives for lessons and separate expectations for different groups of pupils within the class has improved since the school's previous inspection. Lesson expectations are made clear to the pupils. In a Years 1 and 2 lesson, for example, pupils tried very hard to write descriptive sentences about a castle dungeon using a wide range of vocabulary, with older pupils remembering to add commas within their lists of adjectives. The pupils enjoyed creating a gloomy atmosphere with 'rat-infested' being a favourite adjective! The school has been working to develop the feedback given to pupils through marking and there are examples of exemplary marking. There remains, however, variability, especially in the marking of mathematics, which the school is rightly working to improve. In addition, even when marking is strong, pupils are not always given sufficient time to act on the advice given.

Teachers give careful attention to helping pupils develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Systems to help pupils new to the school settle into class are good. Staff are adept at quickly assessing pupils' starting points and using this information effectively when planning work in order to help them progress as well as their peers. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught well through a mix of class, group and individual activities. Those with complex needs are often particularly well supported by teaching assistants ensuring they are fully engaged in their learning. Relationships are good and lessons are well managed and orderly. Teachers and teaching assistants work together well to ensure that pupils with behavioural difficulties are helped to learn to behave appropriately in class. Teachers expect pupils to complete good amounts of work in a lesson and pupils do their best to do this. There are occasions, however, when teachers do not use time well. For instance, they spend too long in initial explanations or interrupt pupils too much when they are working; this reduces the time pupils have to work independently and progress slows.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most pupils typically behave in a way that positively influences their learning. This was observed, for example, when Years 1 and 2 pupils very sensibly gathered information from their classmates about their favourite pets to use in a computer graph-making program. The success of work to improve pupils' ability to take control of their own learning can be seen in the way older pupils discuss what they

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need to do to improve. A small number of pupils with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties are supported well and, as a result, pupils report that disruptions to lessons are infrequent. Consequently, although a small number of parents expressed concerns about the behaviour of a few pupils, others wrote positively about the way the school deals with these individuals and most were positive about behaviour. Inspection evidence supports this view.

Pupils report feeling safe in school, a view reflected by their parents and carers, and they are confident that they will be listened to by adults whether what they are saying concerns school or personal matters. Strong personal, social and health education ensures that pupils are well aware of how to keep themselves safe both in and out of school. The school ensures that pupils with emotional difficulties or those who are experiencing stressful times, for example when a parent is deployed abroad, are sensitively supported. Pupils report that behaviour is generally good and there is very little bullying of any sort in school. Curricular provision ensures that they know about different kinds of bullying and how to avoid it. They are also clear about what they should do on the rare occasions when bullying does occur.

Leadership and management

The headteacher leads the school well. Staff act upon the information gathered from regular checks on the effectiveness of the provision to make further improvements. Action plans to guide school improvement are pertinent and have provided good structures for development work. Improvement activities, for example the development of assessment procedures, have had positive impact and ensured that both the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have been maintained at the good level identified at the time of the previous inspection. These aspects of the school's work and the good teamwork between the headteacher, staff and governors mean that the school is demonstrating strong capacity for further improvement.

Better use of data has ensured greater precision in teaching and promotes the progress of individual pupils well. However, the way data are used to provide information at a more strategic level, for example to provide easily accessible progress information for governors or to take a whole-school view of the progress of groups of pupils, is underdeveloped. While the school can and does access this information, this is too time-consuming an activity to ensure that the analysis can be done regularly and rigorously enough to accelerate progress further. Governors are frequently in the school and there are good opportunities for parents to express their views to them. Governors are both supportive and challenging of the school. They have good overall understanding of the quality of the education provided but, rightly, express a wish to become more critically evaluative of the progress made by pupils through more regular, easily understood information.

The school provides a well-balanced curriculum which is successfully aimed at motivating pupils to want to learn. Pupils have good opportunities to engage in creative and physical activities as well as to steadily gain good basic skills. The

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curriculum is organised well to meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. Pupils commented that working with pupils of different ages helped them to learn. The school's international connections successfully improve pupils' cultural understanding. Their social, moral and spiritual development is promoted effectively both through the curriculum and through the strong emphasis on care for the individual. This emphasis also ensures good promotion of equality and tackling of discrimination. The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is suitably balanced and supports children's good progress. Strong links with others, especially those linked to the military, help the school provide wider opportunities for all pupils and to share expertise with other schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. The safeguarding of pupils is strong and is focused on the well-being of all, including the most vulnerable pupils. Parental approval is high and parents and carers are provided with good amounts of information about their child's progress. While they are regularly kept up to date about day-to-day matters, governors are correct in seeking to make sure the school's website is updated to include a wider range of information.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



2 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Figheldean St Michael's Church of England Primary School,
Figheldean SP4 8JT**

I really enjoyed my time in your school and one of the highlights was talking to you. You will be pleased to know that I agree with you that yours is a good school.

These are some of the things I liked best.

- You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school helps those of you who have had to change school to settle in quickly and to make good progress with your work.
- You receive good teaching that helps you to be interested in what you are doing.
- You work hard in class and are keen to do the best you can.
- Everyone in school takes good care of you. This makes you feel safe and secure.
- You behave well and this helps you to learn in class.
- Your headteacher, other staff and the governing body have worked hard to make sure that your school remains a good one.

To make things even better I have asked your headteacher, governors and teachers to do two things.

- Give you plenty of time to work independently and make sure that marking is always really good at telling you how to make your work better and then giving you time to do what your teacher advises.
- Organise the way information about your progress is kept so that teachers and governors can use it more easily.

You can help to do these things by continuing to work as hard as you can.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Rowena Onions
Lead inspector

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