

St John's Mead Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109229
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	337247
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Jane Neech HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	286
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Craddock
Headteacher	Nicola Berry
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 13 lessons led by 12 different teachers. They carried out joint lesson observations with senior staff, undertook learning walks, observed sports morning, and held meetings with senior leaders, governors, the School Improvement Partner, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at progress tracking and performance data, the school development plan, governor minutes, pupils' work, policies, guidelines, plans and reviews. The questionnaire responses from 60 parents, 98 pupils and 10 staff were also analysed.

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

- the impact of strategies to improve attainment and progress for all pupils in Key Stage 1 and for specific groups such as more-able pupils in Key Stage 2
- the impact of improvements to previously satisfactory teaching, and how well this is ensuring that pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve as well as they can
- the extent to which the revised curriculum meet the needs and interests of all individual and groups of pupils
- the impact of actions taken by the leadership and management of the school, including those relating to community cohesion, on sustained improvements in provision and outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

St John's Mead Church of England Primary School is larger than average and serves the market town of Chipping Sodbury and surrounding area. The school has a maintained nursery catering for 60 part-time places and there are currently 31 part-time children on roll. The proportion of pupils believed to be entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds with a small number from minority ethnic groups and some Traveller families in the fairground business. The overall percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. Pupils are taught in 11 classes, some of which contain more than one year group. Fewer pupils than usual join or leave the school partway through their primary education.

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

At the heart of this good school are excellent care, support and guidance given to pupils, ensuring that every pupil learns and develops with confidence. The school is quite rightly proud of its nurturing approach and its work with individual pupils to ensure that they can gain the most out of all aspects of school life. Parents appreciate the work of the school and particularly the welcoming atmosphere. One parent encapsulated the views of it by explaining that, 'St John's Mead is a positive and caring school where the staff work hard to ensure the culture and ethos permeate the school.' This is credit to the work of the headteacher, who has involved the whole school community in decision making in order to develop its inclusive ethos.

The school has a good capacity to accelerate improvement across all aspects of its work due to:

- the drive and vision established by the leadership team
- improvement in attendance to above average
- a curriculum which is creative and links learning across different subjects together well
- consistently good teaching
- effective self-evaluation procedures which lead to a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- a clear system for tracking pupils' progress, which is being used effectively to provide timely intervention for pupils in danger of underachieving
- the cohesive teamwork displayed by staff and governors in supporting the development of pupils' learning.

The school responds strongly to the needs of its pupils as well as the wider local community. As one member of staff explained, 'People outside school often praise the work of the school.' The school's good links with a broad range of partners supports wide-ranging opportunities for both pupils and the local community, such as pupils taking part in the local carnival. However, whilst the school holds special weeks focusing on community cohesion, opportunities for pupils to learn about life in other parts of Britain and the world are yet to be routinely established through the curriculum.

All groups of pupils achieve well. They show enthusiasm for learning in lessons and speak out confidently, sharing their thinking with each other and adults. Pupils are

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polite, positive and friendly, and they behave well. Pupils display a strong sense of right and wrong through their mature social skills, and new pupils, including Travellers, are readily welcomed into the school. During the inspection pupils were keen to engage with inspectors and offer their positive thoughts about the school. All aspects of pupils' work are celebrated. Pupils write their own prayers and this contributes to the development of their spiritual and emotional aspects of learning. Whilst there are strong opportunities for local cultural experiences, the school acknowledges that wider opportunities for learning about diverse cultures are relatively underdeveloped.

The good teaching is a result of the effective system for monitoring and supporting staff. This has led to improvements in the confidence of staff and to the progress of the pupils. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which is used effectively to challenge pupils when answering questions. Inspectors found evidence of sharply focused marking which gave pupils the opportunity to respond and assess their own work. However, the assessment of pupils' progress to inform ongoing learning activities is not yet consistently embedded in all lessons across all areas of the curriculum.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use assessment techniques routinely to develop learning in lessons across all subjects, so that pupils' progress accelerates and their attainment is consistently above average.
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to learn about the diversity of national and international communities by infusing the creative curriculum with a range of regular cultural experiences.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment is currently average, confirming school data that show improvements in English, mathematics and science for the current Year 6 pupils and increased performance of Year 2 pupils, including the more able pupils, in reading, writing and mathematics. These positive changes in recent attainment represent the impact of improvements to teaching and learning alongside better tracking of pupils' progress. All groups of pupils were seen to be making good progress across the school, including those in mixed-age classes. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and work industriously in lessons. For example, during the inspection, older pupils used a range of complex words to describe the footsteps of a giant from a well-known story. Their imagination was fired by watching an image on the interactive whiteboard whilst listening to the approaching footsteps. This led to pupils' high engagement and all ability groups producing work of high quality.

Pupils are proud of their school and are confident that they are listened to. The school councillors enjoy the opportunity to attend meetings with governors. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and this is reflected in the

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Healthy School status. Mornings are woken up by the 'wake and shake' sessions enjoyed by all. Pupils advise others on healthy lifestyles through activities such as using technology to make their own advertisement for health. The school plays a very important part in the life of the community of Chipping Sodbury through, for example, taking part in cultural events such as musical performances as well as sporting events.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The staff recognises every pupil as someone with individual talents, and this knowledge helps them to meet the needs of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result of the harmonious relationships, everyone participates enthusiastically in lessons. Teaching assistants and teachers plan work together to contribute to the good progress made by all groups of pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable. During the inspection there were a number of examples of good learning opportunities as a result of the partnership between adults. For example, younger children demonstrated high levels of concentration for their age because their teacher and teaching assistant energetically modelled the movements of jungle animals in a movement lesson. Teachers display good subject knowledge and resources, such as interactive whiteboards, are used well. The pace and use of probing questioning in the best lessons ensure that no time is wasted and that pupils have an opportunity to develop their thinking, as displayed in a mathematics lesson where older pupils organised and presented data. Work is marked regularly and pupils are given guidance how to

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

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improve their work. Pupils report that the checklists of learning points provided are helpful in ensuring that they are achieving their targets. However, whilst the use made of assessment information in lesson planning is generally good, it is not yet consistently good across all subject areas.

The creative curriculum contains an element of surprise and this leads to the engagement of pupils. The curriculum is continually developing to meet the needs and interests of all pupils, and this is having a positive impact on attainment and progress. Pupils enjoy the cross-curricular approach to learning, such as the links made between English, science and ICT, giving pupils the opportunity to produce a documentary in the style of a well-known naturalist. The development of ICT across the curriculum reflects a successful focus of improvement work since the last inspection. The curriculum is further enhanced by sporting activities, such as the very well-organised sports mornings observed during inspection. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities and lunchtime clubs. Some of these, such as the art club, are run by older pupils and are greatly enjoyed by younger pupils. Music has a high profile in the school and pupils have good opportunities to learn instruments. However, the cultural diversity aspect of the curriculum is not yet embedded.

Parents, carers and pupils greatly appreciate the outstanding care, guidance and support provided by the school. As a result they have high levels of confidence in the adults in school to help them overcome any difficulties. Support for different groups and individual pupils is exceptional and this is reflected in the above-average attendance and the engagement of parents. As one parent put it, 'I emailed with suggestions and immediately my concerns were acted upon.' Transition arrangements within the school and to the next stage of education are very effective.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The governing body is firmly committed to improvement. There have been changes to the governing body and it now has a mix of experienced and new governors. As a result the current governors possess a range of skills and are well placed to develop the strategic management of the school further. Comprehensive information from the school ensures that the governors fully understand its strengths and weakness and provide effective support and challenge. The governors have correctly identified the training needs for new governors and have plans in place to address their needs. The headteacher, supported by her senior leaders and staff team, is totally committed to

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improving outcomes for all pupils, and they have taken important steps to bring this about, such as careful tracking of pupils' progress through regular meetings. These developments are beginning to raise attainment, particularly in Key Stage 1, and improve the progress made by all pupils.

Everyone in school is considered a leader and the staff team is strongly committed to ensuring that equal opportunities are promoted and discrimination in any form is tackled. Parents are very appreciative of the specific support that vulnerable pupils receive. Safeguarding procedures are good. The school gathers the views of parents through surveys and the very effective parent forum meetings. These have led to specific actions such as a parent project managing the renovation of a small playground, where the views of pupils have been taken into consideration, to provide an interesting play area. Careful thought is given to the deployment of resources and this has been confirmed by the award of the Financial Management Standard in Schools. Although the school promotes community cohesion particularly well within the school and local community, leaders acknowledge that work in relation to developing pupils' understanding of national and international diversity is less well developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The youngest children join the nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding that vary from year to year, but are usually in line with or below expectations for their age. Where skills are low they are in the areas of communication, language and literacy, social skills and the understanding of number. Parents rightly speak very highly of the nursery provision. Children are provided with a range of exciting play opportunities, many of which start from their own interests. As a result the youngest

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children make good, and in some cases exceptional, progress and this continues into reception. During the inspection a group of more-able pupils in reception were observed writing about monsters from a favourite story, correcting their own errors and reading back their work with confidence. Children feel safe at school because all adults know them well and the youngest children have key workers who pay particular attention to their needs. Their personal and social skills develop well because their response to adults is good, they learn to consider the needs of others and they behave well. An example of this was seen when a group of reception children were enjoying a ball game with an adult supporting. Adults work as a team to make lessons fun. They plan carefully so that children have a range of learning opportunities to explore, both inside and outside. In one example 'young researchers' with clipboards and home-made binoculars explored the jungle looking for snakes and tigers! Adults make effective use of assessment and regularly record significant steps in learning made by the children. This information feeds into future planning. The consistent use of learning journeys to track children's progress across both nursery and reception is in early stages and staff have plans in place to develop this further. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers are happy with all aspects of their children's experience at school. A few individuals felt that their child's needs were not being met. However, there was no particular pattern of concern and the inspection team found that both individuals and groups of pupils were well supported. A few individuals felt that their children were not always safe and that incidents of poor behaviour were not responded to. The inspection found no evidence to suggest that measures taken to ensure pupils' safety were not rigorously adhered to. The inspection team discussed the responses to poor behaviour with the school and noted the range of initiatives and work done with families. During the inspection the team observed behaviour in lessons, during playtimes, lunchtimes and sports mornings and were impressed with the pupils' positive attitudes towards one another.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John’s Mead Church of England 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 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 286 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	67	19	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	60	19	32	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child’s progress	17	28	19	32	7	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	48	27	45	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	29	48	28	47	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	24	40	30	50	3	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	45	30	50	1	2	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)	25	42	26	43	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	27	45	29	48	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	25	24	40	6	10	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	30	31	52	4	7	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	22	37	31	52	4	7	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	32	53	25	42	1	2	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 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	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). 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.

Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



24 June 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St John's Mead Church of England Primary School, Bristol
BS37 6EE**

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school on our recent visit. We liked the way many of you, including the school council, took the time to talk to us about your work and the things you enjoy at school. We enjoyed our time with you and were particularly impressed with your behaviour and achievements during your two sports mornings. We were pleased to hear your views and these helped us to make our judgements. This letter is to tell you what we found.

You are right to be proud of your good school. Some aspects are outstanding, such as the way the school cares for you and supports you in everything you do. Your families really appreciate this. Another excellent aspect is the way in which you know how to be healthy and how you advise others to lead healthy lives. You make a strong contribution to the life of Chipping Sodbury and the local community praises your achievements. You tell us that teachers provide helpful checklists for your work so you can see how well you are doing. Those of you who are very young play happily together. You really like the way older pupils give up their time to run clubs for you. In your work you are making good progress overall and I know that your headteacher and staff are working hard to help you do even better.

I have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to work on some areas to improve your learning and achievement further. The first is for your teachers to help you know how well you are doing and improve your work in every subject. We have also asked your teachers to help you learn more about what it is like to live in other parts of Britain and the wider world, by planning opportunities for you to do this regularly in your curriculum.

I am sure you will make the most of the opportunities provided for you and do your best. Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jane Neech
Her Majesty's Inspector

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