

St Sampson's Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126273
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	340949
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Chris Nye HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	147
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Pilgrim
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Blundell
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The inspectors visited 15 part lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher, governors, senior staff, teaching assistants, the partner junior school headteacher and the school council. They observed the school's work, and looked at policies, planning and assessment evidence and monitoring records. Forty six parent questionnaires and questionnaires from all staff were also scrutinised. Inspectors met some parents informally.

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

- pupils' achievement, especially boys, in reading, writing and mathematics
- how effectively teaching and the curriculum are meeting the needs of all pupils
- how effectively the leadership and management at all levels are working together to ensure the sustained improvement of the school.

Information about the school

The school serves the small town of Cricklade and shares a site with the junior school and a privately run pre-school provider. Most pupils have a White British heritage and a few are the children of Traveller families. Almost all speak English as their first language. No pupils currently have a statement of special educational needs, but the percentage with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average. The school has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy School award, Eco-Schools (bronze) and the Silver Active Mark.

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

This is a good school. Some elements of its work are outstanding. Because the school is led and managed well at all levels, it has made significant improvements since its last inspection and operates very effective systems to ensure that these are maintained. For example, recent unavoidable long-term staff absences have not interrupted the very rapid improvement that the school has made since coming out of special measures in November 2007.

The school provides an exceptionally caring and supportive environment in which pupils thrive. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is exceptionally good. They have a high level of awareness about how to keep themselves safe and their understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle is exceptional. Their behaviour is exemplary and pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. As one parent commented, 'It is a friendly and caring environment and many of the teaching ideas have been inspired by, and are inspiring for, the children.' The school is particularly effective in the way it works with partners such as the local junior school, pre-school providers and the local authority Traveller education service to support all pupils, especially those who are vulnerable. However, they have been less successful in improving attendance. Although this is broadly average, it is not yet good enough because it does not meet the targets it sets itself.

Children enter the school in the Reception classes with particular weaknesses in their communication, language and literacy skills. Because of outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and good provision throughout the rest of the school, pupils make good progress and consistently achieve above average outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they transfer to the junior school at the end of Year 2.

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good, and some teaching is outstanding. A focus on improving standards in literacy, especially boys' writing, has been particularly successful because of well-focused teaching and a curriculum that is planned well to meet pupils' needs. Teachers are rigorous in assessing and tracking pupils' progress, but recognise that not enough is done to involve pupils in assessing their own work so that they can take a greater responsibility for, and have a better understanding of, their own learning.

Staff morale is high and there is a determined and united approach towards driving up improvement. This is having a positive and sustained impact on outcomes for pupils. The school's capacity to improve further is therefore good. Governors provide good levels of support and challenge and are developing their involvement in strategic

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planning, although this is not yet fully embedded.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop greater consistency in pupils' involvement in assessing their own work (so that they have a clearer understanding of their own learning) by ensuring that the existing best practice is spread throughout the school.
- Further develop work with parents and carers to raise levels of attendance so that targets are consistently met.
- Ensure that governors have a greater involvement in the strategic planning of the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The lessons observed during the inspection confirmed that pupils achieve well throughout the school. Standards are above average and all groups of pupils make good or better progress. Over the past three years, attainment has been consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics and this represents a significant improvement compared with previous years. In the most recent end-of-key-stage assessments, writing had made a marked improvement because of a successful whole-school focus in this area, although reading had dipped slightly. The school has been proactive in addressing this and inspection evidence confirmed that this academic year standards are being maintained and improved in all three areas. Standards in science, which were average, have also been identified as an area to improve and strategies are successfully raising attainment in this subject.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are accurately identified at an early stage and well-focused support is put in place. Their progress is then very carefully monitored.

Other key features of outcomes for pupils.

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	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

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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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are well planned and activities are carefully designed to support individual learning and challenge pupils of all abilities to improve. Learning objectives are clear and constantly referred to during lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection and most lessons were good, with some that were outstanding. A strong feature of all lessons is the very good relationships that exist between adults and children and the high standard of care and support. The best lessons provide excellent inspiration. For example, a highly imaginative literacy lesson included acting out a trial of the wolf from the Three Little Pigs story. Pupils became very excited and enthusiastic about writing a letter to the judge to plead the guilt or innocence of the wolf! The pace of the lessons is enhanced by very clear, concise explanations and incisive questioning which extends pupils' learning. Occasionally, however, the pace slackens, particularly at transition points. Teaching assistants make a particularly valuable contribution to learning because they are well trained and contribute to both the planning and evaluation of lessons.

Assessment data are used well to identify targets and track progress, and also to accurately inform planning so that lessons meet pupils' needs. The quality of marking is good overall, although the good practice in some classes regarding pupils' involvement in assessing their own work and evaluating their understanding is not yet embedded across the school.

The recently reviewed curriculum is well planned and effectively meets the needs of pupils. It provides a broad range of experiences and links different subject areas together well, for example through emphasising the importance of writing in all subjects. It is enriched by a wide range of activities and events such as dance workshops, clubs and performances. Music is a particular strength and the quality of singing is high. Good quality resources, such as a very well stocked library, further enhance learning and the curriculum.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding, and this enables all pupils to make the best of opportunities provided by the school. Adults know the pupils very well and demonstrate high levels of pastoral care. A particular strength is the way in which

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the school works closely with outside agencies to provide outstanding support for vulnerable pupils, such as those from Traveller families and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result they make good or better progress.

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?

Under the effective leadership of the headteacher, the school has successfully overcome previous weaknesses and staff at all levels show a strong commitment to improve further. The school uses available resources well and provides good value for money. Senior and middle managers have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because monitoring systems are rigorous and effective. The school engages well with parents, although it accepts that communication with some is not always fully effective. It is outstanding in its work with partnership organisations and this is demonstrated by the highly effective transition arrangements that are made for pupils starting at, or leaving, the school. Although many of the governors are new, they are well led and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide a good balance between challenging and supporting the school, but recognise that, although strategic planning is of good quality, they are not yet sufficiently involved in developing priorities. All safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements well and are rigorously applied. There are strong links with the local community and the school effectively promotes community cohesion. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of their own and other communities within Britain and around the world.

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	1

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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

Children make excellent progress in the Reception classes, especially in reading, writing, speaking and listening. They are safe, very well cared for and supported and demonstrate exceptionally good behaviour as a result. They show great enthusiasm for learning because highly imaginative, well planned and organised teaching successfully encourages a curiosity, wonder and fascination of the world around them. They have a very well developed awareness about keeping safe and healthy. There is a very good balance between child-initiated and adult-led learning with clear links to rigorous and effective monitoring and assessment. This ensures that teaching is accurately matched to individual children's needs. The classrooms and outside area are exceptionally well organised and provide an exciting, bright and stimulating learning environment.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are also outstanding. Exemplary records are kept and well trained and qualified adults work very well together as a cohesive team to meet the learning needs of all the children. This is greatly appreciated by the parents. The excellent links with parents and pre-school providers mean that children settle quickly into the Reception classes.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

A relatively low number of parents and/or carers responded to the questionnaire. Almost all of those who returned the form expressed satisfaction with most aspects of the school's work and the outcomes for pupils. However, a small minority expressed concern over areas such as behaviour, leadership and the extent that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Whilst the school accepts that they can improve communication with individual parents, the inspection found that pupils behave

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exceptionally well and that leadership and management are good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Sampson's Infants' 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 46 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 147 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	57	19	41	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	48	22	48	3	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	28	31	67	4	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	46	22	48	3	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	46	22	48	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	35	29	63	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	48	23	50	2	4	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)	14	30	25	54	3	7	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	28	30	65	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	20	23	50	9	20	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	35	20	43	5	11	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	13	28	23	50	9	20	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	37	24	52	4	9	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">■ 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 pupil's 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.



3 December 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of St Sampson's Infants' School, Cricklade SN6 6AX

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school and for helping with the inspection. We really enjoyed chatting to you and the grown-ups, looking at your work and sharing your lessons and assemblies. We thought your Christmas songs were magical!

I am sure that you would like to hear what we thought about your school, which we think is really good, with some things that are fantastic! These are the things we liked most.

- You get a really terrific start to school in the Reception classes, where we think the teaching and your learning are wonderful!
- You are well taught, so you make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. When you leave at the end of Year 2 many of you are doing better in these subjects than children in many other schools in England. Well done!
- You enjoy coming to school because you have interesting things to learn and do.
- You behave really well all the time and look after each other brilliantly! This is because you are cared for really well by the grown-ups.
- The people in charge of your school do a good job, and everyone works well together to help you thrive. They work especially well with outside experts and other schools to make sure you get good quality support when you need it and when you go to the junior school.

To help it improve even more, we have asked your school to:

- make sure that you all let teachers know about how well you think you are doing so that you are clearer about how you can improve your work
- work closely with families to improve attendance
- help the governors develop ways of contributing to long term planning.

You can help by encouraging your parents to get you to school every day. A few of you don't attend regularly enough, and teachers can't teach you if you are not in school!

Good luck with the future!

Yours sincerely

Chris Nye

Her Majesty's Inspector

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