

St Nicholas CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	125230
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	381066
Inspection dates	19–20 June 2012
Lead inspector	Jeanie Jovanova

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	559
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Ellison
Headteacher	Susan Sawyer
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova

Additional inspector

Avtar Sherri

Additional inspector

Anne Duke

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 33 lessons taught by 18 teachers, including guided reading and the teaching of phonics (letter patterns and the sounds they represent). They held meetings with pupils, staff and a representative from the governing body. They evaluated the work in pupils' books. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection. They looked at documents relating to the school's self-evaluation, safeguarding and child protection, development planning, minutes of governing body meetings, notes of visits from external consultants and data relating to pupil performance. They analysed the results of the 209 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with the remainder coming from a range of ethnic groups. Only a few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The school has two classes of intake in Reception. This increases to three classes from Year 3 when pupils from a range of other schools join the school. The school meets the government's current floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. There has been a significant change of leadership since the previous inspection, a new assistant headteacher was appointed in November 2009 and the headteacher left at Easter 2012. At the time of this inspection, the school was being led by an interim headteacher.

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 which parents and carers feel helps their children blossom into well-rounded individuals whose needs are met educationally and emotionally. It is not outstanding because teaching does not yet consistently promote rapid progress in all year groups.
- Children enter the Reception year with skills lower than expected for four-year-olds in reading, writing and calculation. By the time they leave Year 6, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is above the national average because the pupils have made good progress year on year, particularly in Key Stage 1. Where progress has been a little less consistently good in Key Stage 2, this is being addressed and is therefore an improving picture. However, there remains a small minority of lessons where tasks are not precisely matched to pupils' needs to ensure all pupils make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Overall, teaching is good, with examples of outstanding practice. Teachers have high expectations and strong subject knowledge. Marking is a strength in Key Stage 1. However, in some Key Stage 2 classes, it is not sufficiently detailed to help pupils understand how their performance at tasks contributes to their overall targets and also it provides limited opportunities for dialogue. Pupils have opportunities to write across the curriculum; however, writing in lessons other than English is not taught with sufficient rigour to contribute to more rapid progress.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe, display positive attitudes to learning, are courteous and thoughtful, and enjoy coming to school. Attendance is consistently high.
- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have a clear vision. Teaching is well led and performance managed to ensure the drive for improvement is successful. Improvements have been secured since the last inspection, for example, pupils are confident and independent learners from a very early age.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift teaching from good to outstanding so that it promotes equally rapid progress for all pupils in English and mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 2, by:
 - matching tasks more precisely to the full range of pupils' needs in all classes, groups or sets
 - ensuring marking links explicitly to targets and creates opportunities for pupils to enter into developmental dialogue with teachers in terms of what they need to do next to achieve them
 - applying the same rigour to the teaching of written work in all subjects as is expected in English.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils across the school make good progress in most subjects because teachers have high expectations, present stimulating lessons, make explicit links to prior learning and create a sense of purposeful enjoyment that encourages pupils to want to learn. For example, in a Year 4 writing lesson, pupils' learning and progress were outstanding when the pupils used a plan they had drawn up in a previous lesson to develop sophisticated grammar usage based on individual targets. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree that their child makes good progress and inspectors concur.

From their relatively low starting points, particularly in communication and mathematical development, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they catch up and enter Key Stage 1 with skills and knowledge expected for their age. They continue to make good progress so that, by the end of Year 2, their attainment in English and mathematics is above the national average. Progress in Key Stage 2 has been sufficient for pupils to maintain the gains made in Key Stage 1, so attainment has been higher than the national average for four out of the last five years at the end of Year 6. However, the school is aware that there is scope for more rapid progress at Key Stage 2 and is addressing this rigorously. Progress in the current academic year is good in the large majority of Key Stage 2 classes. For example, scrutiny of pupils' English books shows pupils producing work of increasing length and complexity in terms of both language use and grammatical construction. Reading is a strength of the school. Children make rapid gains in Reception because phonics is taught well and there are plenty of opportunities to engage in whole-class, group and individual reading activities. Pupils continue to make rapid progress in reading throughout Key Stage 1 so that their attainment in reading is above the national average at the end of Year 2. Guided reading and innovative approaches to encouraging a love of reading ensure pupils maintain these high standards and they leave Year 6 with skills in reading that are above those of all pupils nationally.

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The progress of different groups is monitored very closely, and the impact of any interventions is carefully measured. Consequently, pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are disabled or have special educational needs do well, as do those who speak English as an additional language.

Quality of teaching

Positive relationships define the ethos in classrooms and this has a positive impact on learning. Clear explanations as to what pupils were expected to do, a brisk pace and teachers continually checking pupils' understanding were some features common to good and outstanding teaching seen. Trust was an essential component too, because it gave pupils the confidence to focus on deep understanding uninhibited by the fear of failure, as mistakes are celebrated as a valuable learning opportunity. For example, in a Year 5 poetry lesson, pupils were confident to perform in groups taking into account the criteria for success that the teacher had skilfully elicited from them. They then evaluated each other's performances with rigour, but also care and tact, and so all made good gains in their understanding of pace, rhythm and speaking with expression. Pupils, parents and carers agree overwhelmingly that teaching is good and inspection findings support this view.

The teaching of reading is highly effective. In Reception, in a phonics lesson, outstanding provision meant that pupils were so engrossed in the challenge of mastering the rule of when to put 'ai' and when to put 'ay' that they did not want to stop learning. In Year 2, a spelling lesson in using the suffix 'ful' so engaged the pupils that one boy could not help but shout out, 'I've got it, I've really got it!' such was his enthusiasm and sense of achievement. By the time pupils reach Years 5 and 6, they are extremely confident readers with remarkable reading stamina for their ages, often choosing to read books of over 600 pages. These, and many other features, mean that teaching promotes pupils' self-esteem, enhances their spiritual, moral and cultural awareness and gives them countless opportunities to develop highly effective social skills.

In the few less effective lessons, teachers do not plan sufficiently carefully for the specific needs of all pupils, for example where those working at the higher abilities within a set need challenge. Marking is not used as effectively as it could be in Key Stage 2. Apart from issues of inconsistency from class to class, there is a generic lack of marking which encourages pupils to enter a dialogue about how they are performing and how this relates to their individual targets.

Small groups and intervention work for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs or those at risk of underachievement are well taught because their effectiveness is closely monitored and adjustments are made to ensure outcomes are positive.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils say they feel safe at school and the overwhelming majority of parents and

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carers corroborate this view. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and can articulate it well, for example explaining how to remain safe when cycling.

The Rights Respecting Schools agenda has helped to ensure pupils take responsibility for their own learning. Consequently, attitudes to learning and behaviours in class are good. Pupils approach tasks with maturity, interest and perseverance. Behaviour is managed consistently well, adults are often heard awarding 'positives', and warnings are used to discourage unacceptable behaviour. Around the school, pupils are polite and treat each other with respect which means incidences of anti-social behaviour or bullying are rare. Pupils are aware of the kinds of behaviours that define bullying and state that, apart from some low-level name calling which is not of a racist or offensive nature, no such behaviour occurs at the school. However, pupils state that should such behaviour occur, they have every confidence it will be tackled swiftly by adults. In discussions, pupils state playtimes are harmonious and enjoyable and inspection evidence, such as the scrutiny of behaviour logs, supports this. The majority of pupils who responded to the questionnaires believe that behaviour is good. Parents and carers support this view.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers at all levels approach the task of improving achievement with zeal and commitment. The governing body has an accurate grasp of data and uses this to challenge the school appropriately. For example, it highlighted the issue of progress in Key Stage 2 which is currently being tackled to good effect. It has a clear vision of what it wants the school to achieve and makes strategic decisions accordingly. For example, the governors appointed an interim headteacher from an outstanding school to ensure that the improvements seen over the first two terms of this academic year were maintained. This has proven to be an astute decision as the momentum has actually increased during her tenure. Close links with the diocese also support the school's drive for improvement.

The vast majority of staff who completed the questionnaire feel that their professional development is well catered for. The management of performance and the leadership of teaching are good. Where quality is already high, performance management maintains this. There are systems in place to identify where there are relative weaknesses and ensure that appropriate steps are taken to remedy them. The improvement in progress in Key Stage 2 is an indication of the effectiveness of these procedures. All this indicates that the school has good capacity to improve.

School leaders and managers ensure that procedures for safeguarding are in line with statutory guidelines. Child protection procedures are very effective and clearly understood by all staff. There is a clear commitment to equality of opportunity. For example, the school ensures that all pupils are able to take advantage of extra-curricular activities and attend residential trips irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds. The curriculum is vibrant and exciting. Strong links are made across subjects because leaders understand that this helps to engage pupils and reinforces key skills needed for later life. There is a strong emphasis on trips to support this

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creative approach to curriculum which parents and carers feel is hugely beneficial. For example, Year 6 had just returned from a trip to Normandy where they were able to see sites that they had learnt about in their recent Second World War topic. Moreover, they were able to use the French they have been learning in real-life situations such as to order items in shops and cafes. Opportunities are also created for moments of awe and wonder, such as when watching the sunset over a lake on the Year 5 residential to Yorkshire. In this, and many other ways, the curriculum is highly successful in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
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.



21 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Nicholas CofE Primary School, Shepperton TW17 9AD

I would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and my team on our recent visit to your school, for giving up your time to talk to us and for completing the questionnaires. We particularly enjoyed listening to your views on learning and behaviour. Your responses were mostly positive and we agree that you go to a good school. These are some of the best things we found.

- You make good progress.
- You are very positive about the teaching you receive and we agree that it is good.
- You are mature and independent in the way you choose to learn.
- You behave well and are respectful to each other.
- The positive relationships you have with teachers help you learn well.
- The leaders at your school do a good job of making sure you are safe and you can learn well.
- You and your parents and carers appreciate the wide range of clubs and trips that the curriculum offers.

To make things even better, we have asked your school to improve teaching to outstanding so that you all make even better progress in all lessons. We would like your teachers to:

- give you work that precisely matches your needs
- make sure that their marking links clearly to your targets and gives you the opportunity to make and respond to comments about your learning
- teach writing as well in other subjects as they do in English.

You can help by telling your teachers if work is too easy or too hard and by responding thoughtfully to the comments in their marking. I would like to thank you again and we all wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jeanie Jovanova
Lead inspector

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