

Nash Mills Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117418
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	358136
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2011
Reporting inspector	David Wynford-Jones

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kim Hobbs
Headteacher	Rosemary Washford Mower
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2007
School address	Belswains Lane Nash Mills, Hemel Hempstead HP3 9XB
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited two assemblies and 16 lessons, observing eight teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They scrutinised a wide range of documentation, including the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, procedures for keeping pupils safe and the school development plan. Inspectors analysed 146 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Is there a trend of any underperforming groups in English and mathematics?
- Are systems and structures for monitoring and evaluating pupils' progress securely embedded in the work of the school?
- How effectively do middle leaders contribute to the development of the school?

Information about the school

Nash Mills is similar in size to the average primary school. The large majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from other minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average and no single group is noticeably larger than the rest. Although the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average, none are at the early stages of learning to communicate in English. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, with fewer than average holding a statement of special educational needs. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average for primary schools. Amongst others, the school holds Healthy School status and the ECO School silver award. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a part-time Nursery and one Reception class.

The school hosts privately run after-school clubs on Thursdays and Fridays. They were not included in this inspection.

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

This is a satisfactory and improving school. All pupils are made welcome. Many regard the school as 'being part of a large family'. The strengths of the school are in the good level of care and the support for pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is above average. They behave well in lessons and make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. The vast majority of parents and carers are positive and appreciative of the school. One wrote, 'The school provides an atmosphere in which our children want to learn. The headteacher and teachers are all very supportive.' This was echoed by others.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress because the provision is matched well to their needs and expectations are high. In Years 1-6, their progress is satisfactory, but more variable because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Over the last three years, attainment has risen steadily. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is average in reading, writing and mathematics. It tends to be higher in English because the school has focused on improving standards in reading and writing. In mathematics, particular weaknesses in pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematical terminology mean that they have difficulties in applying their mathematical knowledge when undertaking investigations.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is some good and outstanding teaching on which the school can build, but staff have insufficient opportunities to share their expertise or to visit other schools. In the better lessons, pupils of all abilities are involved and challenged. Learning proceeds at a quick pace. Where lessons are not as effective, teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan work that consistently challenges and encourages pupils to aim higher. In many lessons, pupils are not given enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and opportunities are often missed to consolidate pupils' literacy and mathematical skills in other subjects. Nevertheless, whilst it is satisfactory overall, the curriculum makes a good contribution to their personal development. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and the vast majority adopt a healthy lifestyle. This has contributed to the school gaining Healthy School status. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds show respect for each other and get on together well. Overall, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

The senior management team and governing body have evaluated the school's performance accurately and identified the right priorities to enhance provision and improve outcomes for pupils. There is a clear sense of direction. Systems and structures have been introduced to monitor the quality and teaching and learning and to evaluate pupils' progress. However, these systems are not yet embedded sufficiently in the work of

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the school or used with sufficient rigour to ensure that pupils' progress is accelerated. Nevertheless, given improving trends in attainment and the determined direction provided by the headteacher and the governing body, the school has demonstrated satisfactory capacity for improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their rate of progress in English and particularly in mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities to undertake mathematical investigations
 - promoting and extending pupils' understanding and use of mathematical vocabulary
 - ensuring pupils apply their linguistic and mathematical skills in other subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that the large majority is good or better by:
 - planning work that is matched more closely to the needs of all groups of pupils
 - identifying opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility for their own learning
 - providing more opportunities for teachers to share and build on good practice.
- Sharpen the skills of leaders and managers at all levels in evaluating the impact of teaching on learning and using assessment information to accelerate the progress of all pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge below the levels expected for the age and make good progress across all the areas of learning. Throughout the school, pupils are generally well motivated and respond well to challenge. Pupils want to take responsibility and undertake voluntary tasks. They contribute well to the school and wider community. They raise funds for charity and take part in local events. The school council and the ECO council help ensure that the school environment is well kept and appreciated as a learning environment. Pupils enjoy particularly planting and tending fruit and vegetables in the raised gardens. This has helped the school in gaining the ECO School award. Pupils feel safe and have a good awareness of safety issues, including e-safety. The vast majority of pupils are reflective and have a good understanding of right and wrong. They enjoy the opportunities to work together and show respect for and celebrate other faiths, cultures, religions and beliefs.

In English lessons, teachers place a good emphasis on promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills and encourage pupils to be proactive in their own learning. For example, in a Year 4 literacy lesson, after reading the text, pupils designed questions to pose to characters in the story. In a role-play situation which followed, pupils responded enthusiastically to the questions. They demonstrated that they understood the characters and could empathise with their situation. However, both strengths and limitations were shown in a mathematics lesson in another class. Following a general introduction, several

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pupils remained with the class teacher for further clarification of their work while others settled quickly to the written activity. Several said they found the work easy and could undertake the calculation mentally. During the lesson pupils were not given the opportunity to think for themselves and were not encouraged to use a range of mathematical vocabulary to explain their calculations.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who find school challenging make similar progress to their peers. Difficulties are identified early and good support is provided. Pupils respond well to additional support provided in lessons and are engaged in their learning. Although there are some minor differences in outcomes between groups, there is no particular pattern over time. Pupils' average attainment in English and mathematics and their good personal development ensure that they have a sound basis for the next stage in their education and later life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has a number of good features, including the use of praise, sharing of ideas with a 'talk partner' and the deployment of teaching assistants. Teachers are confident in the use of the electronic whiteboard. However, some teachers make better and wider use of it than others. Most teachers make clear the tasks the pupils will be undertaking and the criteria by which their learning can be measured, but do not always make clear their expectations of individuals or groups of pupils. At times, their expectations are not high

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enough. This is because lesson planning is not sufficiently detailed and outcomes are not linked closely enough to the National Curriculum expectations. Marking provides pupils with appropriate guidance to improve their work and to reach their targets. Some teachers are more skilled than others at making sure that pupils reflect on their work.

Provision for literacy and numeracy in lessons dedicated to these subjects is satisfactory. However, pupils have insufficient opportunities to consolidate their writing skills and mathematical knowledge and understanding in other lessons. The school has adopted a theme or topic approach to bring pupils' learning in different subjects together. Pupils enjoy the approach and many speak enthusiastically about their work. French is taught in Key Stage 2 and information and communication technology is being used increasingly to support learning. Good-quality displays, throughout the school, reflect the commitment of staff to celebrating pupils' work and promoting their artistic skills. Visits, visitors and after-school activities enhance learning and promote pupils' personal development. Good links and partnerships with the local authority, schools and other organisations support pupils' learning.

Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Staff take pupils' concerns seriously and pupils say that, if they turn to staff, issues will be dealt with. Staff know the pupils well and ensure that those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable receive good support. This enables the pupils to feel included and take an active part in school life.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and middle leaders use their accurate evaluation of the school's performance and needs to provide a satisfactory drive for its development. The school development plan is detailed, but the measures by which the outcomes can be evaluated are not sufficiently precise. Systems and structures to monitor and evaluate the work of the school and pupils' progress are developing well, but have yet to be embedded fully. Teaching is monitored, but the impact of teaching on pupils' learning is not evaluated consistently. Senior managers are now making better use of assessment information to challenge staff and hold them accountable for the progress pupils make towards their targets. However, staff's skills in using assessment information to challenge pupils and raise expectations are relatively underdeveloped.

The governing body has a number of strengths, but is satisfactory overall because it has yet to ensure that pupils make good progress. The governing body works well with the senior leaders to ensure that safeguarding and child protection procedures are followed

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meticulously. Several members of the governing body are trained in child protection and safer recruitment procedures. Equality of opportunity is monitored appropriately and any suggestion of discrimination investigated. The governing body monitors the progress of pupils satisfactorily and ensures the potentially most vulnerable are supported and integrated into the life of the school. The school makes a good contribution to promoting community cohesion. Pupils get on well together and racist incidents are rare. The school has established links with contrasting schools in the local area and in France and Southern Sudan and is seeking to forge similar links within the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Relationships with parents and carers and induction procedures are good, ensuring that children settle quickly in the Nursery and in the Reception class. The children behave well and enjoy learning in a safe environment. Children learn quickly the importance of personal hygiene and how to keep themselves safe. The classrooms are well organised and displays promote learning. Resources are of a good quality and appropriate for the children's age. There is a reasonable balance between activities led by the adults and those that children choose for themselves. Detailed planning ensures that all the required areas of learning are covered. Good use is made of the outdoor area to promote children's learning. Regular assessments are undertaken and the results used to plan activities that capture the interests and needs of the children. The children's individual assessment folders are detailed and record their successes and their progress towards the early learning goals. Good use is made of snack time to encourage children to take responsibility, to consolidate their understanding of number and to engage in conversation.

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The Early Years Foundation Stage team has a good understanding of the strengths of provision and areas for development; these are identified clearly in the development plan. The end-of-year assessments for the last three years shows that children's skills and knowledge in all areas of learning have risen steadily and are now average, reflecting good achievement from their low levels on entry. Staff welcome the involvement of parents and carers and many attended the open morning during the inspection. The parents and carers had the opportunity to share experiences with their children and to find out how to help their children develop their early writing skills.

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 return rate of questionnaires from parents and carers was higher than in most primary schools. Most respondents were entirely supportive of the school. The large majority strongly agreed that their children enjoyed school and that the school keeps their children safe. A few parents and carers commented that the school does not meet their children's needs fully and that they are not making enough progress in school. Inspectors judged that pupils are making satisfactory progress, but are not always challenged enough to reach the standards they are capable of.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Nash Mills 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 146 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 234 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	103	71	39	27	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	109	75	36	25	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	75	51	67	46	2	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	72	49	63	43	9	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	91	62	52	36	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	84	58	56	38	4	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	77	53	68	47	0	0	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)	63	43	70	48	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	78	53	58	40	8	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	72	49	63	43	6	4	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	60	41	75	51	5	3	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	99	68	41	28	3	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	98	67	42	29	3	2	1	1

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



28 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nash Mills Church of England Primary School, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 9XB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school and for completing the questionnaires. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you. You told us that you enjoy school, want to learn and the staff look after you well. We were pleased to find that you have a good understanding of staying safe and most of you are keen to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Well done for getting Healthy School status and the ECO school award. It is good to see that you have such a caring attitude towards the environment. We saw you behave well and show respect for each other. You make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. Standards in the school are rising. You get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. Your attainment by the end of Year 6 is similar to the national average. You tend to make better progress and reach higher standards in English than in mathematics. Overall, your progress is satisfactory.

We have asked the school to do these things to help you reach higher standards:

- to make certain that you have more opportunities to undertake mathematical investigations, to extend your knowledge of mathematical words and to give you more opportunities to consolidate your literacy and numeracy skills in other lessons
- to plan work that is just right for you and to give you more responsibility for your own learning
- to ensure that the senior leaders and teachers look more carefully on the impact of their teaching on your learning, that they share good ideas in teaching and make better use of assessment information to challenge you.

Please remember, to make your school better, you must play your part by trying your best always.

Yours sincerely

David Wynford-Jones

Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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