

# Earley St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110009
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wokingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	378033
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Carnaghan

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	529
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kate Irvine
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Scott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 March–1 April 2009
<b>School address</b>	Church Road Earley Reading RG6 1EY
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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	17–18 November 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 19 lessons taught by 17 teachers and held meetings with pupils, staff, members of the governing body and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at its policies, assessments, documents and questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and 137 parents and carers.

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

- How far does the performance of current pupils confirm that the rise in progress and attainment evident in 2011 national tests has been sustained?
- How well has the school closed the gaps in performance between different groups of pupils, especially between girls and boys, between pupils of Pakistani heritage and their peers, and the disparity in attainment between mathematics and English?
- How far does information about attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the main school indicate good achievement across the school?

## Information about the school

Earley St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided School is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Approximately half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is well above average; the proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is also above average. The largest minority ethnic group of pupils is of Pakistani origin. The school has a slightly above-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities; the largest group of these has specific learning difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and three Reception classes. The school includes a before-school breakfast club managed by the governing body.

**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

Earley St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided school is satisfactory. It has some good features; pupils are happy here and their personal development is good. Excellent relationships, tolerance and good behaviour point to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They embrace the school's cultural diversity and abhor racism, reporting that it is unknown in the school. They resolve any disputes with maturity and common sense. Pupils enjoy the numerous opportunities offered to interact with other faiths and cultures and think deeply about their experiences, for example, after their visit to a local Hindu temple.

Children make a satisfactory start to their schooling in the Early Years Foundation Stage; they develop good classroom routines and learn how to behave well. However, activities do not always develop their abilities fully because staff do not plan or focus on skills development sufficiently or use assessment information well to ensure that work meets children's needs.

Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Given their starting points, this represents satisfactory achievement for all groups of pupils, including those of Pakistani heritage. Support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language is adequate and these pupils' achievement is also satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but inconsistent in quality. Some lessons are lively and engage pupils' enthusiasm. However, some others are poorly planned, heavily teacher-led and offer too few opportunities for pupils to learn independently. As a result, the pace of learning can be too slow. The good curriculum provides pupils with interesting learning opportunities and strongly promotes their personal development. Pupils value the school community and appreciate the good care they receive. Parents and carers support this view, one typically writing: 'Wonderful pastoral care. A stimulating, happy environment, which my children really enjoy.' Pupils appreciate the opportunities to make their views heard in the lively school council. Older ones are happy taking on responsibilities for younger pupils as peer mediators or helpers in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The school has focused on addressing areas of weakness and has started to close gaps in pupils' attainment and progress. Leaders' and managers' actions to promote better teaching have been less effective recently, so teaching remains satisfactory. Accurate self-evaluation has led to more focused school plans and a more rigorous

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use of assessment data, but this is only just starting to have a significant impact on progress. Future plans are now embedded sufficiently to promote continuing improvement. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of 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?**

- By July 2012, raise achievement by increasing the proportion of good and better teaching by:
  - ensuring lesson plans have a stronger focus on pupils' learning rather than teachers' actions, and that the use of assessment information results in work that matches pupils' different needs
  - limiting the time that teachers talk in lessons so that there are more opportunities for pupils to learn independently and collaboratively
  - enforcing tight deadlines so that lessons run at a good pace
  - implementing more systematic monitoring of teaching and learning to eliminate weaknesses and promote best practice.
  
- By July 2012, improve progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - ensuring all adults adopt a greater focus on children's learning and development
  - providing increased opportunities for children to develop their skills through active learning
  - embedding recent changes to assessment procedures to promote better planning and learning in the future.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**3**

Pupils' attainment improved in 2011 but the picture over time is inconsistent and attainment remains broadly average. Attainment and the progress made in mathematics have remained below that in English for some years, but more focused efforts, such as the widespread introduction of setting in mathematics, have begun to close the gap. Boys' attainment is lower than that of girls. A strong emphasis on addressing this disparity has resulted in changes to teaching methods and modifications to the curriculum, with the result that this gap is also reducing. The achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory.

Progress is not yet good because the teaching in too many lessons is no better than satisfactory. Most pupils work hard, even when lessons are less stimulating. School assessment evidence correctly indicates that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers; this is because their needs are well known and they receive satisfactory support. Learning in lessons is largely satisfactory but some the lack of pace and drive in some lessons is a limitation. A Key Stage 1 mathematics

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lesson was typical in that the teacher talked for too long so the pace of learning was slow and there were too few opportunities for pupils to work independently.

Good behaviour is the norm and this contributes to the pleasant atmosphere in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy learning and school life as a whole; they are well briefed on how to stay safe inside and outside the school, for example, when on the internet and the busy local roads. They also show a good understanding of how to grow into healthy adults, appreciating the nutritious school lunches and widely participating in the good after-school sporting opportunities. Concerted efforts have meant that attendance is steadily improving and is now average. Pupils' application of their average basic skills makes a satisfactory contribution to their future economic well-being.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching, although satisfactory, is inconsistent. In the best lessons, teachers share learning objectives with pupils, helping them understand the purpose of the lesson. Strong, supportive relationships and good behaviour and attitudes make a positive contribution to learning. The creative use of resources, such as real objects and information and communication technology (ICT), sparks pupils' interest and deepens their understanding. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils developed confidence in using their numeracy skills through using real coins to distinguish between tens and units. An increasingly wide range of strategies is used in lessons. For example, pupils share ideas openly through 'talking partners'. There are some examples of

<sup>1</sup> 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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good practice in written feedback to pupils and some teachers require pupils to respond to questions posed following assessments. Target setting provides clear guidance in English and mathematics, especially in Years 5 and 6. Where teaching is less effective, the pace of the learning is too slow, with loose deadlines and teachers talking for too long. In these lessons, pupils have too few opportunities to learn actively, independently or collaboratively, they lose concentration and progress diminishes. Most teachers plan work to meet pupils' different needs but this can be inconsistent. Some pupils in Key Stage 1 commented that some of their work did not challenge them. Planning too frequently focuses on teachers' actions rather than on what pupils should learn.

The new creative curriculum enables pupils to develop their key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT through themes which interest them, such as 'India' and 'gadgets and gizmos'. There are good links between subjects, for example using ICT to research work on Roman gladiators. Learning is often related to real-life contexts, for example, designing a sandwich recipe for a competition. Planning to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is starting to raise attainment. Curriculum enrichment is strong and greatly benefits pupils' personal development. Visiting speakers, themed weeks and visits bring the curriculum to life, and pupils enjoy these opportunities. The school's visiting artist makes a good contribution to pupils' artistic development by providing exciting workshops. A good range of after-school clubs helps pupils learn new skills such as Latin, gardening and street dance. These are well attended by all ages; the 70-strong choir is involved both in the school and wider community.

Parents, carers and pupils are satisfied with the school's care and support. There are effective transition arrangements and pupils who join the school at unusual times settle quickly; one commented that she 'immediately loved the school'. Increasingly perceptive use of assessment information enables pupils at risk of falling behind to be quickly identified and supported. The school communicates effectively with external agencies to help potentially more vulnerable pupils, enabling this group to make good progress, socially and emotionally. The school places a strong emphasis on attendance, follows up absences and has reduced absence considerably. The breakfast club is well organised, meets requirements and provides pupils with a secure and happy start to their day.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

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## How effective are leadership and management?

Accurate assessment and improved analysis of data provide the school with a clear picture of pupils' attainment and progress. This information has enabled challenging targets to be set lately and the school is beginning to hold staff to account for the progress of 'their' pupils. However, this process is at an early stage and it has not yet significantly raised achievement. Better inclusion has reduced gaps in attainment between groups of pupils and provides satisfactory equality of opportunity. The school's development plans identify the correct priorities and have led to improvements, but checks on the progress of actions taken are not always rigorous. For example, leaders and managers have not yet met their stated aim of ensuring all teaching is good or better. This is because the monitoring of teaching has been too intermittent and the school lacks a sharply focused teaching and learning policy to eliminate weaknesses and promote good practice.

The work of the governing body is centred on the school development plan and members are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governing body understands and uses assessment data well and members are a conspicuous presence at school events. However, they have no system for visiting the school or gleaning the views of pupils, staff and parents and carers. The governing body works diligently to ensure statutory and safeguarding requirements are met. Staff are very well trained in safeguarding and child protection procedures. Detailed risk assessments show a strong regard for pupils' safety and the effective site security engenders great confidence in pupils, parents and carers alike.

Partnerships support and broaden the school curriculum, for example, the local language college provides additional French teaching for Year 6 pupils. The local cluster of primary schools enables a sharing of music tuition. Active links with the local church enhance the religious education curriculum and improve the support given to families facing difficulties. Parents and carers feel welcome in the school and appreciate the approachability of staff. They receive good information about the progress of their children and school life in general. The parents' association engages many parents and carers in fund raising, encouraging them to offer their talents to the school in areas like helping pupils read.

The school has a sound understanding of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context. The school's actions encourage pupils from an extremely wide range of backgrounds to get along with one another very well. The school has a cohesive atmosphere and its engagement with the local community is most effective. However, the informal manner in which the school promotes community cohesion means that it has only limited links with schools in contrasting environments at home and abroad.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and</b>	<b>3</b>
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<b>driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	3
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	2
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	2
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	3
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	2
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	3
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	3

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and good progress in their physical and personal, social and emotional development. Children develop good behaviour habits and relationships and slowly learn to engage with a range of activities. They are given suitable responsibilities but are not always active learners.

Teachers' plans ensure all aspects of the curriculum are followed, and they have recently been adapted to provide more opportunities for writing. Assessment procedures and information has not hitherto given a clear picture of children's progress, but recent changes now allow practitioners to target and adapt what they do to support better learning. As a result, there is some evidence that progress is improving this term. However, adults do not focus sufficiently on developing children's skills either when they lead sessions or, especially, through appropriate interventions in child-led activities. These activities sometimes lack stimulation and do too little to promote the development of children's skills.

The team of adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage have jointly engaged in self-evaluation activities and leaders have taken action to bring about improvements, such as placing a greater emphasis on writing. Assessment has improved and data are starting to be used as a tool for development, for example, in setting clear targets for improvement. Parents and carers are welcomed into the setting and are very satisfied with what is provided.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire regard the school favourably. A very large majority are happy with their child's experience of school and almost all report that the school keeps their child safe and that their child enjoys school. A few expressed concerns over the support the school gives for their child's learning, the way the school deals with behaviour, and their child's progress. Inspection evidence indicates the school provides good support and deals well with rare instances of unacceptable behaviour. It indicates that progress is satisfactory.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Earley St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided 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 137 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 529 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	87	64	47	34	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	51	65	47	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	32	78	57	9	7	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	28	79	58	15	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	50	36	74	54	6	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	34	70	51	16	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	42	73	53	5	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)	40	29	80	58	6	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	31	75	55	13	9	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	29	72	53	15	11	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	31	23	80	58	14	10	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	38	28	86	63	9	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	63	46	57	42	10	7	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



19 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Earley St Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Reading RH6 1EY**

Thank you for the nice welcome you gave to the inspectors when we recently visited your school. It was lovely to meet such polite, well-behaved pupils.

Earley St Peter's is a satisfactory school. This means it has a number of strengths as well as some areas to improve. You are well cared for and your personal development, in areas like understanding how to stay safe and healthy, is good. Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

You make satisfactory progress because teaching is satisfactory. The range of things you study – known as the curriculum – is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory. To make the school better I have asked leaders to:

- improve teaching and learning, by making lessons more about learning, ensuring they have a good pace and give you more opportunities to be independent, and by making sure school leaders check up on the quality of lessons more often
- bring about faster progress in the Nursery and Reception classes by planning and assessing work more carefully and helping children to develop their skills, especially through active learning.

You can continue to help by maintaining your high standards of behaviour. Once again, many thanks for all your assistance. It was a pleasure meeting you.

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan  
Lead inspector

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