

# St John's Meads Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114576
<b>Local Authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	378892
<b>Inspection dates</b>	24–25 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ted Wheatley

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jonathan Reade
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Flynn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24–25 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Rowsley Road Eastbourne BN20 7XS
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<b>Fax number</b>	01323 412697
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	24–25 November 2011
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 12 lessons taught by eight teachers. Meetings were held with staff, pupils, parents and carers, and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation about pupils' progress and policies, particularly those for safeguarding, as well as the school development plan and evidence of self-evaluation. They considered responses to questionnaires returned by 99 parents and carers.

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

- Has the downward trend in pupils' attainment and progress at Key Stage 2, suggested by data, been reversed?
- How well has the school dealt with relative underperformance in mathematics?
- How effectively is the school dealing with Reception boys' relatively slower pace in developing literacy skills compared to that of girls?

## Information about the school

St John's Meads Church of England Primary School is of broadly average size. The majority of pupils come from a White British background. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is broadly average, and a very small number are at the early stages of learning English. The other languages spoken are Korean, Spanish, German and Greek. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. A significant number of pupils leave and join the school during the year.

**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**

**1**

## Main findings

St John's Meads Church of England Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding and exceptionally well supported by close links with homes and external agencies. Equality of opportunity is exceptionally well promoted, as is community cohesion. The school has excellent relationships with parents and carers. One wrote, 'Entirely caring, attentive staff, always available to consult, guide and advise. The school provides terrific opportunities and a stimulating environment.'

Pupils' attainment is typically above average and rising, with many pupils reaching the higher National Curriculum levels for their age by the end of Year 6. In 2011, attainment dipped a little and was below that expected by the school. This has now been remedied, and current levels of attainment are much improved on the last two years. Pupils' performance in mathematics has improved after fluctuations in recent years. Pupils carry out mental calculations well and explain clearly how they work out problems. They use practical approaches well, for example in the playground, to reinforce their learning and apply the mathematical procedures they learn. Pupils of all abilities make good progress, and some make excellent progress. In mathematics, progress is at least good and is leading to rapid improvement in pupils' attainment. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress, and past underachievement by some boys in developing literacy skills has been reversed.

Pupils' good achievement is largely due to good and sometimes outstanding teaching. In most lessons, assessment information is used extremely well to chart pupils' progress and to match work closely to their needs. This is effective in ensuring at least good progress and pupils enjoy the level of challenge provided for them. Occasionally, work is not quite so closely tailored to individual needs and progress slows a little. Normally, lessons are fast paced and typified by interesting activities that engage well pupils' enthusiasm and concentration. The curriculum is good and has some outstanding features, for example, the way it is enriched by many trips and visitors, the study of Spanish, practical tasks to extend learning and well-supported out-of-school activities. Pupils' literacy work is well displayed; this celebrates and encourages pupils' efforts and involvement in literacy activities. An increasingly wide range of numeracy activities and displays of pupils' work contribute well to an improving profile of pupils' performance in mathematics.

Pupils enjoy school and their attendance rate is high. Their behaviour is generally good and sometimes excellent. They say that they feel exceptionally safe and report

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that bullying is rare and dealt with very well. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of following a healthy lifestyle. Their awareness of foods that are good for them is outstanding, and they take part in a wide range of physical activities. They take on a very wide range of responsibilities in school and the wider community, and carry them out extremely responsibly.

Leaders are exceptionally effective in driving the improvements in progress, as well as ensuring the increasing proportion of excellent teaching. The headteacher provides very clear direction for school improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school is taking highly effective action which is raising attainment and improving progress, especially in mathematics. The governing body is effective. It challenges the school and holds it to account well for pupils' performance. Given the recent improvements in attainment and progress, improved performance by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and significant improvement in teaching, the school's capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the quality of teaching to that of the best by ensuring that work is always challenging and consistently based on the school's accurate assessment information.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Children usually start school with skills that are in line with expectations for their age. High mobility has an impact on attainment and progress in that a significant proportion of new pupils have lower levels of attainment than those who left. However, these pupils make good progress from their starting points. The performance of pupils in Year 6 currently shows strong progress from their starting points. Past differences between achievement in English and mathematics have been eliminated. Pupils have a wide range of literacy skills and they speak and write well. They use an extensive vocabulary and a wide range of writing styles, and express themselves confidently and clearly. They understand the differences between dependent and independent clauses and use them well in their writing. For example, in one lesson, pupils successfully constructed complex sentences about the experiences of soldiers in the battlefield, by producing different statements individually and then finding a partner to link with to produce sentences containing different kinds of clause.

Pupils' good progress is often a result of pupils' enjoyment of what they do, and they take delight in doing well. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils made excellent progress in calculating fractions of various numbers. They took great enjoyment in challenging each other, and in accurately explaining the meanings of the terms they used to describe parts of fractions; this promoted extremely good understanding of mathematical processes. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported and make good progress.

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Pupils are very enthusiastic about school. They are keen to do well and the great majority have a clear understanding of how well they are doing, what their targets are and how they can reach them. They readily help each other. For example, a new pupil, talking about the buddy system to help newly-arrived pupils to settle in to school, said how welcoming and helpful the school and pupils had been. Parents and carers support this view. Links with the church and local community are excellent. Pupils contribute regularly to assemblies and help design local flower beds. They take part in 'love your neighbour activities', singing, charity collections, and following up on collecting and delivering harvest festival gifts to see how they are used. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent, evident in the positive manner in which pupils from all backgrounds work and play together. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the future, as illustrated by their above-average levels of basic skills, very enthusiastic approach to learning and high levels of attendance.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching meets the needs of pupils well, and sometimes exceptionally so. For example, in a lesson on decimals and fractions, the teacher provided different levels of challenge for pupils of different abilities and gave clear guidance on how to deal with any mathematical misconceptions. This engaged pupils' interest and attention effectively and promoted excellent learning. This approach is typical of many lessons. Nevertheless, occasionally, work is not pitched at the appropriate level for all pupils; as a result, pupils' attention wanders briefly and the pace of progress slows. For the

<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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most part, the quality of classroom support is very good, guiding and encouraging pupils effectively and giving them the confidence to do well. Support for pupils with English as an additional language is particularly good, ensuring pupils gain the English language they require to help them rapidly settle into good learning in all subjects. Teachers mark pupils’ work regularly and provide thorough guidance on how pupils can improve their work. Pupils usually follow this advice and their work improves. Relationships are excellent and promote pupils’ confidence to ask questions and join in discussions.

The curriculum provides a rich and varied experience for pupils of all abilities. There are many opportunities for pupils to gain and apply their understanding through practical activities, mainly through imaginative use of the playground. Links between subjects are good, and contacts with schools in Mexico and Malawi are used extremely well to enhance the curriculum. Visits, for example to a Second World War museum, enrich pupils’ understanding of the daily living conditions of people at the time, and provide a valuable resource for developing pupils’ literacy skills. Personal, social and health education is extensive and contributes well to pupils’ social and emotional development. The participation in out-of-school activities is strong, and pupils enjoy, for example, singing, gardening, netball, cricket and football.

The school’s excellent relationships with families underpin the exceptional quality of care, guidance and support. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those whose challenging circumstances may make them vulnerable, are extremely well supported. The school is exceptionally successful in helping pupils who arrive during the school year to settle into school life well. Opportunities for parents and carers to find out about their children’s progress are very good. Despite a few parents’ and carers’ concerns, the school’s communications with homes are extremely good, and significantly improved recently. Transfer arrangements for children entering Reception or moving on to secondary schools are excellent.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<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>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher’s passion for excellence is supported extremely well by other staff, the governing body and parents and carers. The headteacher provides extensive encouragement and support for staff and together they are effective in raising attainment, especially in mathematics, and in improving the quality of teaching. The governing body is effective and well informed about how good the school is. It

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provides considerable support and encouragement for the headteacher and staff. Engagement with parents and carers is excellent. The school ensures it contacts all parents and carers about pupils’ progress. It provides well-supported opportunities for parents and carers to learn about how mathematics and aspects of literacy are taught. Parents and carers support school activities and raise considerable funds to improve the school buildings and resources, as well as organising social activities. They also organise and run some of the out-of-school clubs, to the benefit of pupils. Partnerships to promote pupils’ learning and well-being are outstanding. Pupils benefit from links with other schools and local businesses. Staff gain and provide considerable professional expertise through extensive links with other schools and teacher training institutions. The school promotes community cohesion exceptionally well. Pupils acquire a very detailed understanding of people living in different cultural and socio-economic conditions in Britain and other countries.

The school’s procedures to safeguard pupils are thorough and all requirements are fully met; minor recording issues were resolved at the time of the inspection. Procedures to monitor and ensure the security and safety of the school grounds are effective. The school promotes equal opportunities extremely well. Pupils from all backgrounds make good and sometimes excellent progress and there are no significant differences between groups. Procedures to eliminate all forms of discrimination are outstanding and are well established in the ethos of the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress from their starting points, with the majority exceeding age-related expectations in all skills by the end of the Reception year. Past underperformance by boys in acquiring literacy skills has been reversed, and

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identified underperformance by some girls in developing numeracy skills in the current cohort of children has been swiftly dealt with. Almost all children speak confidently and write well. They ask questions readily and concentrate well on the work they do or the story they listen to. They play and work together well, and confidently question visitors to the classroom. For example, one child asked, 'Who are you? Why are you here? Will you help us?' The majority of children count well and recognise numbers. Children's behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding. Provision is good and staffed by sensitive, skilled adults. There is a good range of adult- and child-initiated activities, based on accurate, frequent assessment of children's progress. Expectations are high and children respond well to challenges. The indoor and outdoor environment is well equipped and supports most areas of learning extremely well, and the school is focusing on improving them further through acquiring resources to improve girls' learning in numeracy. Children are exceptionally well cared for and staff have excellent relationships with homes and nursery settings to ensure children arrive in Reception with their learning needs and abilities already identified. Transfer into Year 1 is very smooth, ensuring learning continues successfully. Leadership and management are excellent, with accurate identification of learning needs and rapid action taken to address them.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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	1

## Views of parents and carers

About half of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, and the great majority of these were positive. A very small minority expressed concern about levels of communication with the school, but inspectors are in agreement with those praising good communications. A small proportion commented that unacceptable behaviour was not dealt with well enough. Inspectors saw nothing less than satisfactory behaviour, and frequently good or excellent behaviour. At no point did behaviour disrupt learning.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John’s Meads 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 99 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 218 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	71	28	28	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	71	29	29	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	43	43	51	52	5	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	54	55	37	37	5	5	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	60	61	33	33	6	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	59	60	29	29	10	10	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	54	55	43	43	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	49	49	38	38	5	5	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	50	51	43	43	6	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	60	61	33	33	6	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	52	40	40	7	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	65	66	28	28	4	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	69	70	27	27	2	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	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.**



28 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St John's Meads Church of England Primary School,  
Eastbourne BN20 7XS**

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly when we visited you. We judged that you are at a good school and that you make good progress. We decided the following things are particular strengths of the school.

- Teaching is good and sometimes excellent. Lessons are interesting and the school provides a good range of activities to make sure you enjoy learning.
- The headteacher, governors and staff work exceptionally well to make sure the school continues to improve.
- You tell us that you feel extremely safe. You behave very well, and your attendance is excellent.
- You have many responsibilities that you carry out very well. You work closely with the church and local community, and raise funds for several charities. All of these things you do outstandingly well.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy. You know what you should eat, and take part in a very wide range of physical activities.
- The school takes exceptionally good care of you and ensures you are safe.

In order for the school to be even better, we have asked your teachers to make sure that the work set for you is always challenging.

You can all help by making sure you tell teachers if you find work too easy.

Yours sincerely

Ted Wheatley  
Lead inspector

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