

# St. Sidwell's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	133442
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	378709
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29 February–1 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	David Townsend

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>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	236
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stephanie Aplin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne Hood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 September 2006
<b>School address</b>	York Road Exeter EX4 6PG
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<b>Age group</b>	3-11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	29 February–1 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	378709



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## Introduction

Inspection team

David Townsend

Her Majesty's Inspector

Phillip Minns

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons taught by 12 teachers and support staff. Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at samples of their work. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and with staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the responses from the 50 questionnaires received on the first day of the inspection. Inspectors looked at school documentation, including its improvement plan, tracking of pupils' progress and local authority and other external evaluation of the school's provision.

## Information about the school

St. Sidwell's is an average-sized inner-city primary school. Mobility has risen markedly since the previous inspection and is high. Considerably more pupils than average join or leave the school at other than the usual starting and finishing times. This is because there are a significant number of families who study or work for short periods at the university. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is other than English. Particularly high numbers of pupils in the younger classes are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils identified as disabled or having special educational needs is below the national average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to that seen nationally. The school meets the current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school holds the Healthy Schools Plus and Active Mark awards. A breakfast club and after-school club are managed by the governing body. The Early Years Foundation Stage includes a Nursery class, which provides education for three- and four-year old children, and a Reception class.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. It is much appreciated by parents and carers with whom it has very effective partnerships. Pupils are very well cared for and are treated as individuals. Their diverse backgrounds are respected and celebrated. Children make excellent progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and outcomes are well above national expectations. The school is not yet judged outstanding because outcomes for pupils are not yet as high across the school.
- Achievement is good. All pupils, including many for whom English is an additional language and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, achieve well. In the national test results in 2011, attainment by the end of Year 6 was average in English and above average in mathematics. In previous years, it was above average in both subjects. Currently though, across the school, pupils' skills in writing are improving but are not as well developed as those in reading.
- Most teaching is good. It is outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage and occasionally so across the school. Sometimes the quality of teaching slips. Progress rates and levels of engagement in the pupils' learning are then lower because the work is less well matched to their needs.
- Pupils behave very well. They show respect for each other and are courteous to adults. Behaviour in lessons is consistently good. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- The senior leadership team is working well with the governing body to drive improvements and to ensure that this is an inclusive school. Middle leaders provide good support to help ensure that pupils' achievement is closely tracked and that teachers receive clear feedback on how to improve their teaching. However, analysis of pupil achievement data and evaluations of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning are not yet refined enough to enable leaders to be more strategic in setting improvement priorities.

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

- Raise the quality of teaching to 100% good or better, with at least 25%

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outstanding, by July 2013 by:

- rigorously monitoring and evaluating the impact of teaching on the progress made by pupils
- ensuring levels of challenge are well matched to the needs of all pupils in lessons and that their levels of engagement in learning are high.
- Secure good achievement in English, particularly in writing, by:
  - increased analysis of data to drive improvement forward and ensure accelerated progress, especially for those capable of the higher levels
  - involving pupils in assessing their own progress and agreeing targets for how to improve their work.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Most children join the Nursery with skills similar to those expected for their age. They make outstanding progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and attainment is above expected levels when they move to Year 1. Children demonstrate strong knowledge of the use of phonic (linking letters with the sounds they make) strategies in attempting to read and write. They demonstrate high levels of motivation for learning, as demonstrated in the focused way children went about re-enacting the Pied Piper story outside, bringing to life the language, as well as the story.

There is firm evidence to show that pupils in Years 1–6, especially those who have attended this school for their entire schooling, have made good progress. Pupils joining the school part way through their schooling, including many for whom English is an additional language, also achieve well. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making better progress than similar pupils nationally, as a result of well-judged withdrawal and in-class teaching support. More able pupils achieve well in mathematics, but their progress is more variable in English. Ethnic heritage and economic background make no significant difference to the rate of progress that pupils make. All parents and carers who completed and returned the questionnaires think their children achieve well, and inspectors agree.

Pupils enjoy lessons and talk positively about their learning. Attainment across the school is average in English and above average in mathematics. Lesson observation evidence shows that in mathematics, Year 6 pupils can use and apply securely established mental calculation skills to problem-solving activities. With many pupils joining the school during Key Stage 1 who are at an early stage of speaking English, standards in reading are average overall by Year 2 but above average for those in school for two years. Pupils employ a range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words, including their knowledge of the sounds letters make. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average and positive reading habits are established. Attainment in writing, though rising, is still only broadly average. There has been a concerted focus on pupils' writing in recent terms which is beginning to pay

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dividends. The school is working hard with those pupils newer to speaking English to develop their vocabulary and sentence construction skills. Inspectors saw in lessons that basic skills, such as spelling and handwriting, are being taught systematically as are the features of different styles of writing.

## Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good. All parents and carers who completed and returned the questionnaire agree, as do the pupils themselves. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to model new concepts and to address pupils' misconceptions about the learning. Teaching assistants provide consistently good learning support to individual pupils and, alongside teachers, lead effective guided-group work sessions to help extend pupils' understanding of new concepts. Imaginative learning resources are used to make the learning more visual and to help pupils organise their thinking. The classroom environment is attractive; displays serve both to celebrate and help guide pupils' learning.

Teaching is outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage: the direct teaching of language and communication skills and the adult support during child-led play activities are both of a high quality. A strong accent is placed on the role of speaking and listening. From an early age, there is good emphasis upon using technical vocabulary to promote children's understanding. The indoor and outdoor environments enable children to develop independence and social skills in a range of practical activities, through which they also develop their language skills.

A small proportion of outstanding teaching was also seen. For example, in Year 6, an inspiring demonstration, using technology, of how poets use language to dramatic effect was followed by well-targeted individualised questions to pupils. Learning was successful because pupils had first been taught basic skills very effectively and could draw on these fluently whilst thinking creatively about how poets convey emotion and excitement through verse. This contributed very well to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. However, upon occasion, the quality of teaching dips below that typically seen and levels of challenge are more moderate, with work set less well matched to the needs of individual pupils, especially those who are more able.

Teachers ensure that the planned curriculum ensures regular opportunities for pupils to apply skills learnt in one subject to another, for example through the use of word-processing skills on computer laptops to help them revise their written scripts. Pupils' work is well assessed and they typically receive constructive advice on how to improve their work through teachers' marking. Opportunities for pupils to self- and peer-assess their own writing are working well, but are too recent in Year 3 and 4 for their impact on progress rates to be fully established.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

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Parents and carers, as well as pupils and staff, are very clear that the standard of behaviour around the school is typically very good. Many parents and carers were full of praise for the exceptional care afforded to pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. Inspection evidence fully endorses these views. Pupils feel safe and understand how their actions contribute to a safe learning environment for everyone. They conduct themselves very well when moving around school and relating to others, including visitors. Moral and social development is good. Pupils know right from wrong and are considerate of others; this is particularly evident in the way newly arrived pupils are helped to settle quickly in school by their peers as well as adults. Good links with other professional agencies help ensure this. Pupils enjoy and value the relaxed atmosphere of the breakfast and after-school clubs which are well managed.

Pupils respect and value the school's approach to behaviour management. They have a good understanding of what bullying is and the different forms it can take. Bullying in any form and racist incidents are extremely rare. Scrutiny of behavioural records confirms that this is the case over time. Pupils know to whom they should turn with a worry or a concern and are confident that the school deals effectively with any incidents that arise. Pupils' attendance is above average and punctuality levels are good. Pupils behave well and work hard in lessons. When the teaching is outstanding, they show the highest levels of involvement in, and responsibility for, their own learning but this is not yet the norm.

**Leadership and management**

The inspirational headteacher leads a united team of staff and governors, who are committed to raising achievement. Leaders at all levels use a wide range of monitoring activities including effective procedures to assess and track pupils' achievement. Challenging targets are set for pupils' achievement and teachers are held to account for these through effective performance management arrangements. Monitoring and evaluation are based on the collection and scrutiny of a wide range of data about pupils' progress, although analysis is not yet sufficiently deep to push attainment consistently to the highest levels across all subject areas, especially in English.

Since the previous inspection, a number of improvements have been secured by leaders, demonstrating the school's good capacity to improve. Leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage is now outstanding; new initiatives are evaluated rigorously to ensure they bring maximum benefits to children's learning. The curriculum has also improved and is good. It is broad and balanced with well defined progression of skills in each subject. It promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils well. A world map displayed in the hallway shows the countries with which each pupil has family links and their cultural heritage is celebrated well through lesson studies and special events. Topics such as 'Africa' are selected to enrich pupils' understanding of the world around them.

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Teaching is comprehensively evaluated by leaders at all levels and teachers are given well-judged feedback about the quality of their classroom practice. This has led to the provision of effective professional development opportunities, including the sharing of good practice among colleagues. Lesson observations do not always pinpoint precisely how well teaching has maximised progress for all pupils and this inhibits the school's efforts to make all teaching consistently good or better.

The school engages with parents and carers very successfully. Of those who responded through the questionnaire, a very large majority reported that the school takes account of their suggestions and ideas and helps them to support their children's learning. The way that all groups are valued and nurtured is indicative of the priority given by leaders to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. Links with the local community, including the church, are strong and make a good contribution to pupils' learning and personal development.

The governing body is increasingly confident in providing good support and challenge to school leaders to help drive improvement. Governors play a central role in ensuring that policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and implemented well, including effective arrangements for safeguarding. These meet statutory requirements and recommended good practice has been adopted.

## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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](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.

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.
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.**



2 March 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St. Sidwell's Church of England Primary School, Exeter EX4 6PG**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school and for completing the questionnaire. We enjoyed our visit and talking to you.

St. Sidwell's is a good school. Children in the Nursery and Reception class get off to an excellent start to their time in school. By the end of Year 6, your attainment is broadly average in English and above average in mathematics. Your progress and achievement are good. Those of you who completed the questionnaire told us that you think teaching is good, and we agree. In our discussions, you told us that you enjoy school and feel safe because the staff look after you very well. You know that you can turn to them if you are worried. You behave very well around school, show respect for each other and adults, and are very welcoming to visitors. Your readiness to be reflective and creative and your knowledge of other faiths and customs lead us to the judgement that the school fosters your social, moral, spiritual and cultural development well.

We have asked the school to do the following to help you make better progress and reach higher standards, especially in English.

- Focus more closely, when observing lessons, on how well each of you is moving forward in your learning as a result of the teaching you receive.
- Ensure that in all lessons, you are all fully challenged to achieve and are highly involved in your work.
- Look at and compare your results more deeply to check which approaches work best in helping you all make more rapid progress with your writing.
- Involve you in assessing your own writing and agreeing your writing targets with your teachers.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely  
David Townsend

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