

# St Alban's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104364
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	355566
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 December 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jeremy Spencer HMI

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	183
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alison Pettit
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Croser
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	St Albans Close Wolverhampton WV11 2PF
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 10 lessons and all six teachers working in school at the time of the inspection. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils, observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documents including policies, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's raising attainment plan. The inspection team also analysed six staff questionnaires, 70 pupil questionnaires and 35 parent and carer questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How effective is the school in evaluating its own performance?
- To what extent do leaders and managers focus the school's efforts on priorities and the subsequent impact made on pupil outcomes?
- Why do pupils make slower progress in mathematics than in English?

## Information about the school

St Albans Church of England Primary School is smaller in size than the average school, situated on the border between Wolverhampton and Walsall. The building has very recently undergone significant refurbishment. Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has risen sharply in the last three years and is now higher than average. The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is slightly below the national average. The headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

**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

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They also say that they feel safe, secure and enjoy coming to school. The headteacher has accurately identified key areas which need to be improved. However, other senior leaders do not contribute to self-evaluation in sufficient depth or rigour, leading to a lack of focus in some of the school's improvement plans. The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Children make a satisfactory start in the school's Early Years Foundation Stage. They demonstrate good relationships with staff and with each other. However, the systems for tracking the progress of children in the Nursery and Reception classes are not sophisticated enough to enable accurate measurement of their progress, particularly those demonstrating lower levels of knowledge and skills. Systems to track the progress of pupils as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2 do not allow leaders to easily evaluate the progress of different groups of pupils. Therefore the impact of the school's intervention and support groups, designed to support underachieving pupils, are not measured in sufficient depth. The headteacher has developed a comprehensive new tracking system to measure pupils' progress but the system is not yet embedded across the school.

Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school, and leave at the end of Year 6 with attainment in line with that expected for their age. Progress in recent years has been slower in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2 and slower in mathematics than in English. Pupils make slower progress in mathematics because strategies for teaching calculation are not consistent across the school. The school is currently developing a calculation policy, due to be completed in the spring term of 2011. Work in exercise books shows that pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in a variety of contexts. Nevertheless, there is an improving trend of results at Key Stage 2 and results in Key Stage 1 in 2010 improved considerably.

The majority of teaching in the school is satisfactory, and inspectors found evidence that teaching is improving. The headteacher knows the staff well and has identified development points for each teacher. Subject leaders in English and mathematics evaluate teachers' planning on a weekly basis but do not observe colleagues' lessons frequently enough to gain a thorough understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in each class. Pupils work towards individual targets in English and mathematics but many pupils still do not demonstrate a clear understanding of the next steps they need to take in order to improve.

The school works in partnership with St Albans Church and the church minister leads collective worship in the school, particularly linked to key Christian festivals. The school curriculum covers a range of different faiths and cultures but is not effectively supported

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by visiting representatives from other cultures. The school has rightly identified that partnerships with others from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds are not well developed, particularly partnerships with those from further afield in the national and global arenas, in order to improve the effectiveness of the school's promotion of community cohesion. The school engages with a large majority of parents and carers in a satisfactory manner but a small minority believe that the school could provide them with better guidance in helping to support their child's learning.

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

- Improve the rate of pupils' progress in mathematics by ensuring that:
  - pupils who are underachieving are quickly identified and well supported
  - there is a consistent and progressive approach to the teaching of calculation
  - pupils are given increased opportunities to use and apply their mathematics skills
  - parents know how to best support their children with mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels by:
  - embedding a pupil tracking system which enables them to more easily track the progress of different groups of pupils, in order to plan more effectively to meet their needs
  - developing systems to ensure they are able to contribute to self-evaluation and improvement planning in greater depth
  - ensuring that they have increased opportunities to observe and improve the quality of colleagues' teaching.
- Further sharpen the use of assessment to support learning by:
  - improving the assessment of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage to take into account age-related bands of learning, in order to plan more effectively to meet the needs of all pupils
  - ensuring that pupils are given accessible and realistic targets to work towards.
- Improve ways in which the school works in partnership with others to provide pupils with better opportunities to develop their understanding of cultural diversity, in local, national and global communities.
- 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.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In 2010, assessments at the end of Year 2 show significant improvements on previous years in reading, writing and mathematics. Unconfirmed results at the end of Year 6 also indicate that pupils' attainment has risen and, despite a dip in 2009, has otherwise maintained the trend of steady improvement in recent years. Current work observed in lessons and in pupils' exercise books is of a satisfactory standard and in line with that expected for pupils of their age. Improved

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planning by teachers, and increased teacher modeling of writing in lessons, have led to sustained improvements in pupils' written work. Improved teaching and effective small-group and one-to-one support for pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are also having a positive impact on pupil outcomes in English, but less so in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because staff are aware of their needs and work well with other agencies to support them. However, their progress is not always monitored in sufficient depth.

Pupils' good behaviour is indicative of their good moral understanding and is also helped by the fact that they enjoy learning. During the time of the inspection, pupils were presenting their annual Christmas performance. Pupils took great pride in the well-attended performance. Pupils have a good awareness of how to eat healthily. However, their understanding of social and emotional aspects of health and well-being are less well developed. Pupils take responsibility in many ways, for example, through their work with the school council and in undertaking a range of roles and jobs within their classrooms, such as becoming 'register monitors'. Pupils' moral and social development is good and this is reflected in the respectful and courteous way they treat each other. Pupils' appreciation of cultural diversity is less well developed. Pupils engage with those from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds in school, but are not given the opportunity to meet with groups beyond the immediate school community. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their education and demonstrate satisfactory basic skills.

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*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>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

While there are good lessons, the positive features of these are not sufficiently widespread and embedded. As a result, pupils make uneven progress through the school. The headteacher recently introduced a new lesson planning format for teachers which has developed greater consistency in the quality of planning. Where lessons are carefully planned and work is well directed and managed, pupils make clear gains in their learning. For instance, Year 3 pupils thoroughly enjoyed designing an experiment to test which foods are bad for teeth. The work was suitably challenging and they showed great perseverance to complete the task. However, teaching methods do not always engage all pupils, who sometimes spend too much time listening passively to the teacher. This reduces the time they have to practise and use their skills, particularly in mathematics. In other lessons, where the pace of learning is too slow, pupils start to lose concentration.

Marking is up to date and encouraging but does not consistently point out what steps pupils should take to improve their work. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own work and progress, but this is variable. In some classes, teachers do not sufficiently emphasise the importance of presentation and the quality of pupils' work. The curriculum is satisfactory, with enrichment activities and well-attended after-school clubs providing pupils with a range of opportunities to develop new skills and interests. Good use is made of information and communication technology in some classes, especially interactive whiteboards and hand-held devices in Key Stage 2.

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Staff know pupils well and there are strong and caring relationships between adults and pupils. However, the school's systems to promote the improved attendance of pupils are at an early stage of development. Satisfactory systems are in place to aid the smooth transition of those children arriving into the Early Years Foundation Stage and those pupils moving on to secondary education at the end of Year 6.

Recent and significant improvements to the school building and accommodation space give the school increased capacity to improve provision. For example, the school is currently setting up a new library and a new community learning room.

*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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders, many of whom are new to their roles and many with several key roles in this small school, are showing determination to remedy weaknesses and make the necessary improvements. They have an increasing understanding of the school's strengths and its areas for development. Strategies have been adopted which have resulted in some improvements in teaching and learning and increased rates of pupils' progress, particularly in English. Systems to keep a regular check on the quality of teaching and pupils' work have been implemented. However, there is inconsistency in how well this information is used. Although leaders have identified appropriate areas for development, such as improving achievement in mathematics, subsequent action plans are not sufficiently detailed. They do not always give clear and precise targets for improvement nor do they describe clearly how, when or with whom the monitoring outcomes will be shared. The headteacher is supporting subject leaders by increasing their understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

The governing body is well organised and provides a good level of support and challenge. It knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school, is active in the school community and has efficient procedures in place to ensure its members are well trained. The governing body ensures that the school provides satisfactory value for money and that it works well with the local community and is increasingly aware of its place within multi-cultural Britain. The school's systems ensure that equality of opportunity is satisfactory. There is no discrimination and every pupil has the same opportunities to join in with activities and make a contribution. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and arrangements are regularly and suitably reviewed. However, the school acknowledges that its plans to promote e-safety could be further improved. The school has formed a good partnership with the local secondary school in order to improve learning opportunities for pupils. For example, pupils learn to swim there, use their all-weather sports pitches and

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also use their school garden to grow vegetables. However, links with the local children's centre are still in the early stages of development.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</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>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The levels of knowledge and skills demonstrated by children on entry to the school fluctuate significantly from year to year. Children make satisfactory progress from their starting points as they move through the school's Nursery and Reception classes. Planning, teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. Ongoing assessments, including observational notes of progress made by all members of staff, are an integral part of the learning and development process. Assessment over longer periods of time lacks rigour and the school acknowledges that this needs to improve, as does the sharpness of improvement planning. Leadership and management are sound. Relationships with parents are good in the Nursery and Reception classes and the popular 'Parent Share' group, coordinated by a senior teaching assistant, enables parents to work alongside their children in the classroom on some occasions.

*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	3

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Stage

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers express positive views about the school. Whilst the great majority are happy with the school, a small minority believe that the school does not help them to support their child's learning well enough. Inspectors identified that the school could do more to help parents and carers to support their child's learning in mathematics, particularly for older pupils. Other parents and carers brought up individual concerns. All of these issues were considered during the inspection and discussed, preserving anonymity, with the headteacher.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Alban's 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 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 183 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	51	15	43	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	46	14	40	3	9	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	34	18	51	4	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	10	29	18	51	4	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	31	19	54	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	34	13	37	6	17	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	40	21	60	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)	12	34	16	46	2	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	31	15	43	2	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	26	20	57	2	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	40	15	43	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	10	29	23	66	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	40	17	49	2	6	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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.**



10 December 2010

Dear Pupils,

**Inspection of St Alban's Church of England Primary School, Wolverhampton, WV11 2PF**

You may remember that I recently visited your school with two other inspectors. I would like to thank you all for making us so welcome and being so polite and helpful. We had a chance to talk with many of you. You told us that you like your teachers and said that there is always somebody to talk to if you have any problems. You behave yourselves well in school and this is brilliant to see! I would also like to thank you and your parents and carers for filling in a form that let us know about your school.

We think that St Albans Church of England Primary School is a satisfactory school. We found that you have good relationships with the teachers and with each other and that nearly all of you enjoy school. We were pleased to see how proud you were of your excellent Christmas performance. There are many good things in your school but we think there are some areas to work on to make school even better. Firstly, we think that some of you could do better in mathematics, so we have asked teachers to look at how well you are doing and how quickly you are improving a little more closely. We have also asked teachers to improve the ways in which they teach you to calculate numbers and solve problems and would like them to show your parents and carers how to help you improve too. We would also like you to use targets more in your learning, so that you understand exactly the next steps you need to take in order to get better. Finally, we would like you to have more visitors to help you learn about and understand people who live their lives in different ways to your own and have different beliefs. It would be exciting for you to make contact through the school with pupils and adults in other schools and places, both in our own country and overseas. Your headteacher, the staff and the governing body work very hard and want the school to continue to improve. You can help too by making sure you come to school as often as possible and by working hard all the time. Thank you once again for being so helpful and remember to always enjoy your learning!

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Spencer

Her Majesty's Inspector

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