

St Thomas and St Anne CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123525
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	359457
Inspection dates	20–21 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Roughan
Headteacher	Catherine Budd
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Four teachers were observed teaching seven lessons. In addition, inspectors sampled five lessons taken by teaching assistants which included forest school for Reception children and focused support in literacy for older pupils. Meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils and informal discussions were held with pupils, parents and carers on the playground. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment information. The inspectors analysed questionnaires on behalf of 32 pupils from parents and carers, 36 from pupils and 13 from staff.

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

- Pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics.
- Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2, especially in Year 3 and Year 4.
- How well more able pupils are challenged to do their best.
- The effectiveness of arrangements in the Early Years Foundation Stage to promote children's independent learning.

Information about the school

This is a small primary school which draws many of its pupils from outside the village in which it is located. The vast majority of pupils are of White British origin. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. Children join Nursery from a variety of pre-school settings including the on-site setting, Hanwood Pre-school. This Pre-school is privately managed and subject to a separate inspection. Most children transfer to the school's Reception class, either in September or January. Reception children are taught usually with Year 1 pupils, especially in the autumn term, but sometimes separately or with the Nursery children. All other pupils are taught in two mixed age classes. The school has Healthy Schools status and holds the Eco-Schools Green Flag and Activemark Gold awards.

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

2

Main findings

This is a satisfactory and improving school. A very large majority of parents are pleased with the quality of education it provides. Although attainment remains average overall by the end of Year 6, it has increased steadily since the last inspection in the younger years. Children's skills by the end of Reception now exceed national expectations and pupils' standards in Key Stage 1 are above average. This is a direct result of management decisions that have focused on building the success of the school from 'the bottom up'. As a result, teaching and the pace of pupils' learning have improved and the proportion of lessons that are good or better has increased. To raise achievement further the school's leaders are rightly focused on ensuring greater consistency in the rate of pupils' progress, strengthening curriculum provision and the use of assessment in Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics.

The school has a considerable number of strengths. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well organised. Children settle very quickly and make good progress. Pupils enjoy school, as reflected in their excellent attendance. They take a keen interest in their natural environs and make good use of the varied opportunities they have to exercise responsibility and develop reasoned, mature views.

The capacity of the school to improve further is good. The headteacher and governing body provide purposeful leadership. There is a clear sense of direction to the school's work, deriving from accurate self-evaluation. This is securely based on effective analysis of a range of evidence gathered through the school's well established monitoring procedures. For example, leaders have correctly identified that work is needed to develop the school's contribution to community cohesion and pupils' knowledge of diverse cultures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and accelerate pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 by
 - providing pupils with a wider range of opportunities to develop their investigative and reasoning skills in mathematics
 - planning more opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects
- Ensure full consistency in the quality of teaching and assessment in Key Stage 2 by
 - maintaining a brisk pace to all lessons, so that pupils, especially the more able, are fully challenged
 - making full use of assessment opportunities to guide and extend pupils' learning

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- Accelerate the implementation of the school's plans for strengthening community cohesion and in so doing enhance pupils' cultural awareness by providing them with more first-hand experiences of people from different national and/or ethnic backgrounds.
- 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. Children's skills when they join Year 1 are now above average. Historical evidence shows that standards in Year 6 have been broadly average for the last three years but these pupils' started in Year 1 with average standards, which means that over time they have made satisfactory progress. Standards in English have been higher than in mathematics. Most pupils make good progress in English, but progress in mathematics is satisfactory overall. There are some variations in progress between year groups. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and now commence Key Stage 2 with above average standards, but progress has been slower in Year 3 and Year 4. However, the present Year 6 pupils have made good progress. This pattern of progress is largely replicated for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Lessons seen during the inspection and a sample of pupils' books broadly confirm the above picture. Year 1 pupils questioned the Vicar about baptism practices and wider religious concepts with great curiosity and a surprising degree of maturity. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 3, in their first writing task of the new term, made good efforts to write enterprising stories about Red Riding Hood using some expressive verbs and adverbial place phrases. While some of the older pupils were confident in tackling problem-solving tasks and explaining their reasoning in mathematics, others were unsure how to proceed and this was not picked up quickly by the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities made good progress in small group lessons for literacy but on other occasions their progress was more variable.

The attitudes and behaviour of the vast majority of pupils are good. A very few older pupils behave less well. Although this behaviour is managed well, it slows the pace of learning at times. Pupils relate well to each other and to the staff. They emphasise that they feel safe and well cared for. The school's awards for promoting healthy life-styles are well merited. Despite the small size of the school, pupils take part enthusiastically in a wide range of physical activities and have a good awareness of how to stay healthy. Their very effective contribution to the school, for example, in the roles of school councillors, healthy champions and eco-representatives fosters their self-confidence, sense of independence and social and speaking skills well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, but there are some gaps in their knowledge and understanding of other cultures. Although attendance is outstanding pupils' average standards in literacy and numeracy means that they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their education.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and make good use of questions to test pupils' understanding of new concepts. They use new technology effectively to capture pupils' attention and sustain this well through carefully prepared resources and tasks which are well designed to promote pupils' enjoyment of their learning. The pace of learning is brisk in lessons in Key Stage 1 and supported well by pupils' impeccable behaviour which ensures that no time is lost. Lesson endings are used well to check and reinforce pupils' learning. This pace is not fully maintained in Key Stage 2. On a few occasions, detailed lesson planning does not result in tasks which provide just the right amount of challenge for the different levels of ability in the mixed-age classes and not enough good use is made of short feedback sessions in lessons to review and guide pupils' learning. This reduces the time pupils have to complete tasks fully and extend their learning.

Enrichment activities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and their enjoyment of learning. Pupils participate keenly in the wide range of activities, spanning sport, music and art and are appreciative of the opportunities offered by the new learning pod facility, for example, to support their homework. The curriculum promotes the development of literacy skills well in Key Stage 1 and new initiatives are emerging to extend pupils' learning by making more explicit links between subjects in Key Stage 2 and to develop wider opportunities for gifted and talented pupils. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well established. This, together with other

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intervention programmes for pupils at risk of underachieving, has been effective in keeping pupils on track in Key Stage 2.

An important factor in pupils' wellbeing is their sense of emotional security at school. Pupils make full use of the attractively varied facilities, which include opportunities for music-making, in the well maintained school grounds, to arrive at lessons refreshed and in a positive frame of mind. The emotional and social needs of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are met well by staff, support from specialists or through partnership with other agencies. A meticulous approach to recording and following up attendance has helped to ensure the school achieved its challenging target for attendance last year.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's focused approach and strong aspirations for pupils' achievement have been fundamental to recent improvements. The skilful use of an appropriate range of monitoring systems has ensured that the school's work is very effectively reviewed, the right priorities are identified and the necessary actions taken. Pupils' progress is closely tracked, which has supported the setting of increasingly challenging targets. Colleagues who have taken on subject responsibilities have been supported well to acquire expertise in their new roles. The governing body provides good levels of support and challenge and has been particularly effective in ensuring that the difficult exercise of restructuring staff in the light of fluctuating numbers on the school roll has been well managed. School leaders are vigilant in ensuring pupils are safe and systems for child protection are based on good procedures and practice. The school promotes equalities to only a satisfactory level as its good work in supporting pupils pastorally is not yet matched in similar outcomes for pupils' academic progress in Key Stage 2. There are emergent plans in place to pursue national and global links to strengthen the promotion of community cohesion.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start Nursery their skills and knowledge are largely in line with those expected for their age. A strength of the setting, much appreciated by parents, is the close links with the pre-school which enable children to settle and adapt to routines exceptionally quickly. Meticulous attention is paid to children's welfare requirements and no opportunities are missed to enable them to take physical exercise, for example, by hopping while carrying out counting routines. Relationships with adults are excellent and independence actively fostered. Consequently children are confident to talk about their experiences. They are keen to make suggestions and demonstrate, for example, how they can negotiate a safe way back to their place mats in the school hall. This good progress is maintained in Reception. The children (currently all boys) thoroughly enjoy their learning, because it is well adapted to their interests and stimulates their curiosity. The opportunities afforded by Forest School are skilfully planned to combine the indoor and outdoor aspects of children's learning. The boys, for example, took great pleasure in gathering berries and weighing out ingredients to make tasty blackberry and apple crumbles.

Good leadership and management has been instrumental in improving the quality of provision since the previous inspection. Children's progress is accurately reviewed and there are good plans in place to make fuller use of the other outside areas to extend children's skills further, especially in numeracy and writing.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The statistical responses reflect the very positive views that parents and carers hold about the school. Few written comments were received. These were largely complimentary, especially with regard to provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Inspection findings corroborate these views almost entirely, as is described elsewhere in this report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Thomas and St Anne CofE 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 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 96 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	69	10	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	75	8	25	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	63	8	25	4	13	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	66	8	25	3	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	59	13	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	56	14	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	69	10	31	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)	18	56	11	34	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	59	10	31	2	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	50	11	34	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	56	13	41	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	63	11	34	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	75	8	25	0	0	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). 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Thomas and St Anne CofE Primary School, Shrewsbury, SY5 8JN

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school recently. This is what we found out.

Yours is a satisfactory and improving school and there are several good things about it. The following are particularly important: Children get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception. Pupils also make good progress in Key Stage 1 and standards in Year 2 are above average. Nearly all pupils behave well. You enjoy school and develop your personal and social skills well. You feel safe and practise healthy lifestyles well. The headteacher and staff are making sure that your learning is steadily improving.

To make sure that standards are also regularly above average by Year 6 and improve your progress in Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics, I have asked the staff to do some things. The staff are to give you better chances in mathematics to carry out investigations and explain the reasons for your thinking and more chances to develop your skills in literacy and numeracy in other subjects. Teachers should also make sure that lessons always move at a fast pace and make full use of assessment. In this way you will be kept on your toes to do your best, especially those pupils who find learning easier. Finally, I have asked the staff to help you find out more about the lives of people of other backgrounds and nationalities.

All of you can help by keeping up your super attendance and trying your hardest, especially in mathematics.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken

Lead inspector

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