

St Katherine's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115264
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	379050
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Revd Marion Walford
Headteacher	Annette Keeney
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 16 lessons, observing eight teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, and members of the governing body. Informal discussions were held with parents and carers as they arrived with their children at the start of the day. Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised assessment information, pupils' books, records of pupils' progress and school improvement plans. Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 101 parents and carers, 112 pupils and 10 staff.

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

- How effectively are the more-able pupils challenged in lessons and through provision for the gifted and talented?
- What evidence is there of the school's action to improve writing, particularly for boys?
- How well does the school support the learning and personal development of the pupils with a statement of special educational needs?
- What is the impact of the creative approach to the curriculum on the pupils' learning?

Information about the school

Most pupils are from White British backgrounds in this average-sized school. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Fewer pupils than in most primary schools are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well above average; their specific needs are varied. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a half-day nursery and a Reception class. The school has recently received the Eco-Schools Silver award and is in the process of re-validating its Healthy Schools status to the newly established model.

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

2

Main findings

The school has been on a path of improvement since the last inspection, driven forward by a highly effective team of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. This improvement is continuing as the school strives to become even better. Parents and carers are pleased about the levels of care for their children and how the school keeps them safe. The pupils' good and improving progress is based on effective teaching, a redesigned and rich curriculum and excellent attention to their care, support and guidance. As a result, attainment is average and rising by the end of Year 6.

- Children make a confident start in the Nursery and Reception classes. They settle quickly into exciting and well-resourced classrooms, greatly enjoying well-planned activities that move their learning forward at a good pace.
- Teaching is more effective than at the last inspection because of the successful focus placed on developing teachers' skills. The most effective teaching provides activities that challenge the more-able, particularly in mathematics. However, questioning is not always used skilfully enough to challenge thinking and not all teaching makes the most effective use of time available.
- The school has recently reviewed marking and the use of targets in recognition of variations in practice and effectiveness. Targets are too wide ranging to focus the pupils sharply on how to improve and they have only limited opportunities to be involved in assessing their learning and that of others.
- The curriculum now provides a more interesting and enjoyable series of experiences. Topic themes are making learning more interesting, particularly when linked to educational visits. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is a strength, and music plays a major role in school life.
- Boys have made slightly slower progress than girls in writing although this gap is closing by developing the pupils' skills in contexts they find engaging, often closely linked to their topics.
- Effective support built on warm and constructive relationships with staff enables pupils with a statement of special educational needs to make good progress towards their targets even if at times the steps are quite small.
- The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. The early identification of any pupils falling behind their targets and highly effective action, including sharply focused programmes, help them catch up rapidly. By having a very clear understanding of the circumstances of each pupil, the school successfully points families to services available locally.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to adopt a safe and healthy

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lifestyle. They speak eloquently about how to stay fit and healthy. By integrating safety issues into the curriculum pupils feel safe and become equipped with the skills to deal with potentially risky situations.

- The pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in above-average attendance. They behave well, show consideration towards others and are keen to succeed as shown by their concentration and hard work.

The leadership team keeps staff focused on driving forward further improvement. The headteacher is supported well by effective middle leaders and a supportive yet challenging governing body. Thorough monitoring and accurate self-evaluation provide a firm basis from which leaders plan for the future. As a result of strong improvements in the quality of provision, school leaders have ensured that the pupils' achievement and personal development continue to improve. This provides the school with good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching in order to accelerate progress by:
 - developing teachers' questioning skills
 - making more effective use of the time available in lessons
 - making targets for improvement sharper for the pupils
 - providing opportunities for pupils to assess their learning and that of their peers
 - planning opportunities for pupils to reflect on and respond to their teachers' marking and other feedback.

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

When learning is most effective, pupils are attentive, show interest in what they are doing and are keen to succeed. They greatly enjoy their learning and collaborate well, particularly when sharing their ideas in discussion with others. For example, Year 5 pupils worked diligently on activities applying their skills of rounding whole numbers and decimals to various problems. Pupils write in a wide range of interesting and engaging contexts, often closely linked to their topics. They also develop their skills of enquiry and investigation and apply their information and communication technology skills to support learning in a range of subjects. However, they sometimes lose concentration when teaching or activities last too long and lessons lack pace.

Year 6 test results have been broadly average for the last few years. They rose in mathematics in 2011 but fell in English because several pupils did not do as well in the writing test as the quality of their work in class had suggested. There is no significant variation in attainment by ethnicity. Assessment data and observations in lessons show that most pupils in the current Year 6 are working at least at the level expected for their age and a considerable number at a higher level. Pupils who have

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problems learning literacy are supported well through activities in lessons and specific withdrawal sessions, and make good progress.

Pupils show respect for each other and their views, and feel their own views are sought and valued by the school. Their contribution to school life is extensive such as through their school and eco councils. Charitable work, such as the 'shoe-box' appeal, is a considerable strength. Pupils participate in large numbers in the wide range of physical activities and many walk and cycle to school. Pupils greatly enjoy participating in a wide range of musical and other cultural activities. Quiet places around the school give them time for reflection and pupils in their topic work in Year 6 showed great empathy with the lives of children in Victorian times. The link with a school in Germany helps to develop the pupils' understanding not just of the language but also of the lives of others. However, there are fewer opportunities for them to understand and experience diversity nationally.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are interesting and move learning forward at a good pace in calm and well-managed classrooms. Teachers are confident and skilled at drawing out ideas from the pupils and adapting their teaching in the light of their responses, but this is not always the case when teachers do not target their questions so that more-able pupils are challenged. Pace is generated when teachers vary the activities and use resources such as modern technology to stimulate interest, but at times sessions are too long and learning drifts. Marking gives pupils clear guidance on how successful

¹ 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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they have been, but they are not always given the opportunity to respond to their teachers' comments and so improve their work in order to meet their targets.

The recently-introduced, themed approach to the curriculum is a major factor in the pupils' enjoyment of learning, although these changes have yet to be embedded fully and their impact on achievement evaluated. Pupils greatly value the role they play in shaping the work they undertake in each topic. Programmes are adjusted carefully to meet the learning needs of the pupils and extended for those with particular talents through workshops with other schools and activities in school. Experiences are enriched in a wide variety of ways and pupils benefit considerably from the expertise of outside providers and activities in partnership with local schools.

The school provides a welcoming environment where pupils have great confidence in staff to advise and support them. Well-trained and carefully deployed support staff provide effective help for pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school is proactive in working with other agencies and partners to meet the needs of pupils whose circumstances make them potentially more vulnerable. This includes the well-run breakfast club that is much appreciated by the families accessing it.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work closely as a team giving the school a clear direction based on seeking to break down any barriers that might impede the pupils' learning. Their expectations are demanding and they have been successful in raising the expectations of teachers. They are supported in this drive by an effective team of subject leaders. Staff morale is high and teamwork is strong. Teachers share ideas and improve their practice by having the opportunity to work alongside others in order to improve their skills.

Promoting equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's work and reflected in the effectiveness of support for potentially vulnerable pupils. By checking assessment data carefully, the school is able to take action if any underachievement or gaps in the performance of different groups emerge. This has led to gaps closing in writing between boys and girls. The harmonious environment reflects the school's success in tackling any forms of discrimination.

The well-led governing body has a good oversight of the school. It challenges the

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school to do better and is closely involved in self-evaluation and forward planning. The governing body rigorously fulfils its responsibilities for safeguarding by establishing robust systems to protect pupils and ensuring that the school adopts recommended good practice.

The school makes a strong contribution to promoting greater community cohesion. It reaches out well to communities locally and abroad, but has less impact nationally. The headteacher is strongly committed to partnership working, recognising the value of additional expertise that the school would not otherwise be able to provide. Increasingly close links are being developed with home so that parents and carers can take a more active role in supporting learning. This includes workshops on specific aspects of the curriculum and regular communication about school events.

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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes from skills below those expected for their age on entry. Attainment is broadly average in all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Direct teaching of key skills is highly effective and adults know when to intervene to move learning forward when children are at work. Children have plenty of opportunity to plan aspects of their learning and they become increasingly independent as they move through the classes. They show initiative, respond well to adults and work together happily and for long periods.

Focused assessments identify when key steps in learning have taken place and are used to plan activities to meet each child's needs and interests. These quickly capture their imagination, such as the amazement shown by nursery children when they viewed, through magnifying glasses, snails starting to eat cabbage leaves.

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Similarly, Reception children showed great determination to make a simple circuit without instructions to bring light to 'Little Bear's dark cave'. The outdoor area for Reception is being developed as the school recognises that it is not as effective for learning as the inside.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a very clear vision for the future direction of the setting and has already been instrumental in introducing initiatives that now need time to bed in. Teamwork is a strong feature in both classes. There is an increasingly close and effective relationship with home. The recent 'Letters and Sounds' workshop and weekly learning sheets sent home in Reception help parents and carers support their children's learning at home. 'Learning Journeys' are a valuable record capturing important moments in each child's development and increasingly include contributions for home. Close attention is paid to the children's safety such as the new fence to protect the Reception classroom. Consequently, they feel safe and secure in each class and form trusting relationships with each other and the adults.

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 proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire is higher than the average for primary schools. The level of satisfaction is above average in response to almost all questions. Inspection evidence endorses parents' and carers' very positive views about the school particularly over the quality of teaching, the progress their children make and how they are prepared for the future, and the way in which their children are helped to adopt a safe and healthy lifestyle. A small number of parents and carers believed that the school does not manage behaviour well. Inspectors found that behaviour is good overall. Inspectors investigated anonymously through discussions with staff the concerns of a small number of parents and carers about how well the school listens to their suggestions. They concluded that the school is increasingly seeking to take account of parents' and carers' views and this is the opinion of the large majority.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Katherine'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 101 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 235 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	73	72	25	25	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	72	71	26	26	2	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child’s progress	43	43	51	50	1	1	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	49	49	45	45	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	58	37	37	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	63	62	34	34	1	1	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	58	39	39	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)	45	45	43	43	7	7	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	52	51	43	43	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	45	37	37	10	10	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	41	45	45	7	7	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	50	50	42	42	5	5	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	67	66	30	30	4	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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"> ■ 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.



11 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Katherine's Church of England Primary School, Canvey Island SS8 9QA

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We saw that you work very hard and are proud of the part you play in school life. Inspectors were particularly impressed by your confident answers to their questions. We found that St Katherine's is a good and improving school. These are the things we liked most.

- The headteacher, staff and governors do their utmost to help you all to succeed, to take care of you and make sure you are kept safe.
- Your positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour contribute significantly to making the school calm and happy.
- The curriculum provides many enjoyable experiences for you, including lots of clubs and other events.
- The school works well in partnership with others to support your learning and has formed strong links with your parents and carers.
- Teaching is good. Teachers use assessment data to support your learning and help you to make good progress.
- You develop an excellent understanding of how to adopt a safe and healthy lifestyle and make a major contribution to school and community life.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are given excellent support so that you can make the same good progress as others in your classes.

We have asked the school to ensure that all of the teaching in the school is brought up to the quality of the very best. You can all play your part in helping the school to get even better by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale
Lead inspector

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