

St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Hadleigh

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124760
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380976
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Claire Woods
Headteacher	Andrew Frolish
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2009
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who visited 14 lessons taught by seven teachers. Inspectors spoke with staff, parents and carers, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, attendance records, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, school planning and risk assessments. They also analysed the questionnaires received from 88 pupils, 20 staff, and 130 parents and carers.

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

- How effective has the school been in narrowing the gender gap between boys' and girls' achievement?
- Are progress and rates of learning consistent throughout the school for pupils of all abilities or is there variation between classes?
- How do leaders and the governing body assure the reliability of teachers' assessments and drive improvements in provision and outcomes?

Information about the school

This school is smaller than average. Most pupils are White British, with very small numbers coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils learning English as an additional language is small. Fewer pupils than average are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Of these pupils, most have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Children in the Nursery and Reception Years come together in an Early Years Foundation Stage class. The headteacher was appointed in September 2010. St Mary's has ActiveMark and Bronze Eco awards, and has Healthy Schools status.

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

St Mary's provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Parents and carers readily attest to the improvements they have seen since the appointment of the headteacher. One summed up the views of the great majority in commenting, 'The new headteacher has really put his heart and soul into the school and I am in no doubt that his attitude is moving the school forward.' The biggest transformation has been in the relationship with parents and carers which was flagged as an issue in the last inspection report. At that time, the school had lost the confidence of many parents and carers, as reflected in a sharp fall in the number of pupils on roll. Numbers are now rising fast as a result of the very strong partnership that has been built with parents and carers. An exceptionally high proportion returned questionnaires and their views were overwhelmingly favourable. They especially appreciate that staff are readily approachable and that the school keeps them well informed, including through regular newsletters and an up-to-date website. Regular homework gives them a good opportunity to support their children's learning.

Attendance is good. It rose very sharply last year. Pupils' conduct in lessons and around the school is good, although pupils' learning behaviour is not as strong. Pupils do not all listen well enough in lessons, particularly to each other's contributions, and this sometimes slows the pace of their learning. Though they otherwise manage pupils' behaviour well, teachers do not all do enough to insist on 'good listening' in lessons. The curriculum has improved. It is now good, and the effort made to identify topics and themes to interest and motivate boys is having a positive impact. Again, parents and carers confirm this. One described how her son has 'grown in confidence and now comes home and reads rather than playing on his games console', explaining that, 'This is because learning has been brought to life in projects such as the Second World War and fantasy character dress-up from their stories.' Although there has been a very wide attainment gap, with boys attaining much lower standards than girls, that gap is narrowing.

Attainment is average and pupils make satisfactory progress. This accords with teaching and learning that are satisfactory rather than better because they vary in quality. Teachers do not always, for example, make sufficient use of the assessment information that they have available to them to match work to pupils' different capabilities. Too often, more-able pupils are given work that is too easy. Children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is notably faster, so the challenge for the school is to ensure that pupils build consistently in Key Stages 1 and 2 on the above-average standards now being attained by the end of the Reception Year.

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Arrangements for ensuring pupils' welfare are appreciated by parents, carers and pupils alike. As a result, pupils feel safe at school and have a very good understanding of how to keep safe. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory rather than better because provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities varies in quality. All these pupils have individual education plans but some incorporate much sharper targets than others. Not all of the plans set out the practical steps for staff to take to support and accelerate each pupil's learning.

Leaders ensure that teachers' assessments are checked, both internally and in partnership with neighbouring schools, but managements systems are not robust enough. Shortcomings that are identified are not always followed up quickly or with sufficient rigour, and the school's 'single plan' for driving improvement does not set out clear enough paths for the action required to achieve its measurable objectives. This is why some inconsistencies remain. Many management systems in the school have only newly been introduced and have had insufficient time to show through in terms of impact, particularly in terms of raising attainment. However, school self-evaluation is very accurate and this, together with the improvements confirmed by parents and carers, demonstrates the school's satisfactory capacity for continued improvement.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of the summer term 2012, raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in lessons by:
 - always giving pupils work that is matched to their different capabilities, particularly ensuring that more-able pupils are challenged and extended
 - maintaining a brisk pace of learning and ensuring that activities are allotted appropriate time and always enable pupils to build on what they have learnt before
 - developing and consistently applying strategies for improving pupils' listening skills
 - devising more cross-curricular opportunities for pupils to give practical application to their literacy and numeracy skills
 - setting clear targets in the individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and identifying in all cases the practical steps that staff need to take to move these pupils' learning on
 - ensuring that all pupils are given clear guidance through marking that shows them what they need to do to improve their work, and that they are routinely given time to reflect on and respond to the comments teachers write.

- Develop more robust management systems by the end of the autumn term

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2012 through:

- checking on the progress each pupil is making through more frequent progress meetings
- easing pupils' transition between key stages, particularly to ensure that pupils are helped to fully capitalise in Key Stage 1 on the good start they get in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- strengthening the 'single plan' as a management tool for staff and the governing body by setting out clearly the steps to be taken in order to achieve the plan's measurable success criteria
- focusing leaders' monitoring of lessons on pupils' learning and progress
- rigorously following up points for development identified by school leaders when they visit lessons and scrutinise assessment and pupils' work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory because they make satisfactory progress to attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. However, there is variation in rates of pupils' progress. For example, the school's tracking data show that last year's Year 6 made very slow progress in reading when they were in Year 4 but exceptional progress in reading when they were in Year 6. This variability is mirrored in current provision. Pupils made good progress in a Year 5 and 6 English lesson because teachers' expectations were high, focusing the pupils on what they needed to do to improve their punctuation. By contrast, progress was much slower in a Key Stage 1 science lesson because the work was pitched at an inappropriate level for the pupils. Pupils learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. In those lessons where all are given similar work to do, it is more-able pupils who do less well than they should. Pupils' average literacy and numeracy skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are polite and friendly, and they treat each other with care and respect, even if that is not always so evident from their listening skills in lessons. They take a keen interest in the locality and the wider world, and they speak with pride of taking part in the bicentennial celebrations of church schools at Westminster Abbey and St Edmundsbury Cathedral. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities they have to take on responsibilities in school, including as play leaders and school councillors. They have a good appreciation of the need for a healthy diet and regular exercise, and the after-school sports clubs are all well attended.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning Taking into account:	3
	3

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Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
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	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils are well motivated because they like their teachers and are keen to please them. As the pupils confirm, teachers succeed in making learning fun, but they do not always extend pupils enough by matching work to the often widely different capabilities in each class. Where success criteria are set out at the start of the lesson, these are often the same for all pupils regardless of their abilities or prior attainment. Sometimes, the pace of learning slows because too long is allowed for some activities. Where this occurs, pupils' attention begins to wander. Pupils all have targets, and many know and refer to these, but marking varies in quality and does not always give clear enough guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers are not always rigorous enough in correcting spellings and other errors. Where teachers write comments or identify 'next steps' for the pupils, there is not always evidence from pupils' books that they have considered the teacher's comments and responded to them.

The curriculum has been made stimulating and exciting, with staff particularly looking out for ways of improving writing skills and better engaging boys as a route to raising their previously low attainment. The recent Fantasy Week was a stimulus for much creative writing, and a focus in each class on extending vocabulary and punctuation is having a positive impact. In the younger classes, the focus on letters and the sounds they make has had a beneficial impact. Although there is more writing for different purposes across other subjects, opportunities are missed to further extend pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Parents and carers are unanimous in their view that the school keeps their children safe. However, arrangements for accelerating the progress of pupils with special

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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educational needs and/or disabilities are not sharp enough. Every term, leaders check with teachers on the progress each child is making, but that is not frequent enough to ensure prompt interventions to boost the performance of pupils who fall behind. Transition arrangements do not ensure children make the same good progress in Key Stage 1 that they make in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and leadership team have a shared vision for moving the school forward but many of the school's systems are newly revised and are still work in progress. Leaders' monitoring of lessons is perceptive in identifying areas for improvement. However, these recur because they are routinely not followed up through subsequent lesson observations. Leaders' lesson observations sometimes give them an overly positive view of teaching because they do not focus sufficiently on the progress pupils make in lessons. Equal opportunities are promoted satisfactorily. The gender gap between boys' and girls' attainment is narrowing, but more-able pupils are not challenged enough in lessons.

Governance is satisfactory. The members of the governing body realise that they have not, in the past, done enough to challenge leaders over standards. The governing body now has fuller information about what goes on in school, not least through its members' more focused visits. It ensures that the school's work to tackle discrimination is satisfactory and that arrangements for safeguarding meet regulatory requirements. Community cohesion is promoted well, both within and beyond the local community. Links, for example, with a local farm contribute to pupils' ecological awareness, and the school has developed links with schools in Kenya, France and Nepal.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities	3

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met	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the nursery with starting points that are broadly in line with expectations. They make good progress and are well prepared for future learning by the time they leave the Reception Year. Recent initiatives are beginning to accelerate boys' progress in writing, which has been behind that of the girls. Learning activities are well planned and strike an excellent balance between those led by adults and those initiated by the children. Among improvements since the last inspection, the newly created outdoor area is used well to promote a wider range of activities and experiences and the larger playground provides plenty of opportunities to help children develop their physical and social skills. Teachers and teaching assistants in both the nursery and reception classes work very well together, and joint planning gives many opportunities for children to make choices and gain a wide range of experiences. All adults are very skilled at observing, tracking and recording children's progress. Parents and carers are kept well informed and are regularly welcomed into school to see, first-hand, the progress their children have made. Strong leadership and effective management ensure that children learn well, within a well-resourced, welcoming and secure environment.

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

An exceptionally high proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The views they express are overwhelmingly positive about every aspect of the school. They especially appreciate the efforts made to involve them

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and to keep them well informed. A very small minority raised concerns about behaviour management, and although the inspection team found this to be the weakest aspect of care, guidance and support, it is satisfactory overall.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Hadleigh 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 130 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 170 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	92	71	36	28	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	73	56	57	44	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	77	59	53	41	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	61	47	61	47	5	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	77	59	51	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	70	54	55	42	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	42	71	55	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)	57	44	70	54	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	61	47	65	50	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	37	71	55	10	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	38	76	58	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	73	56	53	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	85	65	43	33	2	2	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 8 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.

14 November 2011



Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Hadleigh, Ipswich IP7 5BH

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school and for sharing your views with us. Your parents and carers told us how much more pleased they are with the school now than in the past and we were impressed with the close partnership the school has been built with them. The headteacher and leadership team have made a big difference, and they have driven improvements that have, for example, made the curriculum more interesting and fun, but we have suggested some further ideas to increase the positive impact of the work they do.

St Mary's is giving you a satisfactory education because the teaching is helping you to make satisfactory progress and reach average standards in the Year 6 national tests. We have suggested some ways in which your teachers can help you all to make the same good progress throughout the school that children make in Ash class.

The school takes appropriate care of you. Your attendance is good and you know a lot about how to keep healthy and safe. You also like the opportunities you have to take on responsibilities. We were pleased to see how well you all get on together and your good conduct in lessons and around the school, but we also noticed that your learning slows in lessons where you do not all listen carefully enough to your teachers and to each other's contributions. You can help to make faster progress by doing your very best to listen attentively when others are talking to the whole class. You can also help by taking care always to read and follow the advice teachers give you when they mark your work.

Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful, and my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward
Lead inspector

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