

# Morpeth All Saints Church of England Aided First School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122297
<b>Local authority</b>	Northumberland
<b>Inspection number</b>	380444
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 November 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clive Petts

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	145
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Simpson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Pauline Molloy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 April 2009
<b>School address</b>	Pinewood Drive Lancaster Park Morpeth NE61 3RD
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in eleven lessons, taught by six class teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body and spoke to staff and groups of pupils. They analysed 97 questionnaire responses from parents and carers and scrutinised questionnaires from staff and pupils. The inspectors also looked at pupils' progress and achievement data, pupils' support programmes, documents relating to the safeguarding of pupils, school policies and plans for improving the quality of learning. They scrutinised pupils' current and past work and spoke with a local authority officer to discuss the conclusions to a recent review of the school's work.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The quality of learning and the rate of progress made by all groups of pupils, particularly the more-able, in developing literacy and numeracy skills.
- The quality of teaching and its effectiveness in accelerating the rate of pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 and in tackling any other pockets of relative underachievement.
- The extent to which senior leaders have established a clear vision for school development and are demonstrating the capacity to drive and sustain improvements to achieve their ambitions.

## Information about the school

Morpeth All Saints is a smaller than average size first school. It serves a residential area to the north of the market town of Morpeth and surrounding villages. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. Although increasing, a much lower-than-average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities. Very few have a statement of special educational needs. The privately run Dawn to Dusk childcare and the out-of-hours club, situated on the school site, are subject to separate inspections and the reports are available on the Ofsted website. Following an extended period of staffing disruption, the school appointed a substantive headteacher in 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?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

### Main findings

This is a good school. It has improved markedly since the previous inspection under the positive and often inspirational leadership of the headteacher. Her staff and an incisively-led governing body share her ambitions and strong sense of purpose. There is a highly positive climate for learning where, 'Learning with Love and Laughter' is fundamental to the school's Christian ethos. A very large majority of parents and carers are happy with their children's experience. The parental comment, 'The school has a welcoming atmosphere in which to learn and grow', sums up the views of many.

Most children start school with skills which are broadly typical for their age, though cohorts vary a good deal. Children make rapid early progress in the Nursery, settling in the happy, friendly atmosphere. By the end of Year 4, attainment is above average, which represents good progress overall. Pupils' good achievement and enjoyment are evident because the quality of teaching they receive is good. Nevertheless, the school recognises that there is not enough outstanding teaching and, as a result, the pattern of progress is uneven as pupils move through the school. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make faster progress because imaginative and thought-provoking approaches capture their interest. Pupils are confident explaining their ideas. Pupils' progress is slower across Key Stage 1, particularly in writing and mathematics. This is because expectations of what pupils can achieve sometimes vary and are not always high enough to challenge pupils' thinking and explanations, especially of the more-able. The positive action taken by the headteacher is enlivening learning with a sharper focus on achievement in lessons. As a result, the rate of pupils' progress is accelerating and gaps in attainment are closing. Opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their skills, although not all are exploited effectively enough. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the very few pupils at early stages of learning English, make the same good progress as their peers. This is because their needs are identified quickly and the support they receive is effective. Routine marking is constructive and helpful with good use made of personal targets and 'Steps to Success'. However, marking is not consistent in providing written advice on how pupils can improve their work.

The school successfully teaches its pupils to respect difference and to be considerate of others. This is apparent in their good and sometimes exemplary behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to have fun and enjoy their learning, a factor in their above average attendance and improved punctuality. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure. The

school has established trusting and well-informed home-school partnerships. The headteacher has brought about improvements by honest and constructive school self-evaluation which informs further improvement accurately. The governing body provides good support and much expertise in developing quality assurance systems. Robust measures are in place to check pupils' progress, although the analysis of the impact of action taken to improve pupils' outcomes occasionally lacks sharpness. Subject leaders' skills are being progressively developed. These actions show that the school has a good capacity to sustain improvement.

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

- Continue to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment in Key Stage 1, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
  - raising further the expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially the more able
  - continuously challenging and questioning pupils' thinking and understanding to ensure pupils explain their ideas and justify their answers
  - continuing to increase opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills in all subjects.
- Increase the proportion of teaching which is outstanding by:
  - using and building upon current imaginative and thought provoking practice within school to sustain pupils' interest and promote even more enjoyment
  - sharpen approaches to the evaluation of teaching to ensure that the action taken is having the intended impact in the classroom
  - making certain that teachers' written feedback in books provides consistent and detailed guidance on how pupils can improve their work.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2
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Pupils are keen to learn and are enthusiastic about their activities, responding very positively to the guidance and prompting of staff. For example, pupils were observed to be totally engrossed analysing photographs and explaining their observations of the nearby town market place in Victorian times. The progress pupils make from their starting points as they move through school, although good overall, is inconsistent because the expectations, challenge and pace in a few lessons are variable. Current school information and inspection evidence demonstrate that rates of progress are accelerating and attainment is rising, especially in Key Stage 1, as initiatives to eradicate variations in progress and achievement become more effective. Attainment gaps in writing and mathematics are closing, particularly for the more-able pupils. In a literacy lesson, for example, pupils of all abilities made thoughtful use of descriptors, confidently explaining the feelings and emotions of the main characters in Little Red Riding Hood. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress, because their tasks are thoughtfully matched to their individual needs and interests.

Pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development is good and is apparent in the way they enjoy their lessons and achieve well. They behave well, are safety

conscious and develop into polite and thoughtful pupils. Pupils get on extremely well together and with the staff and they willingly take on responsibilities around school. Their strong pupil voice is evident in daily school life, for example establishing a code of conduct for monitors and diners to improve the quality of their lunchtime experience. They make a positive contribution to the wider community, for example celebrating the making of their school banner in nearby St Nicholas’ Cathedral. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep fit and stay healthy. This includes their first-hand experiences in growing their own vegetables in their garden. They display a good understanding of the cultural diversity that exists in the world around them.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with examples of inspiring teaching which stimulates pupils’ thinking. In the best lessons, active and fun approaches combine with high expectations, so that all activities are well-matched to the range of abilities and needs. As a consequence, progress is good and pupils acquire new skills quickly. Open-ended questioning probes pupils’ understanding, such as when a teacher quickly folded a sheet of paper repeatedly into fractions of its original size, while asking pupils to identify equivalent fractions. When progress is inconsistent, less is demanded of pupils, too much time is sometimes spent on the same task, questioning does not probe pupils’ understanding sufficiently and explanations are not always requested. Challenging targets are set and although frequent marking is helpful, a clear sense of how to improve is not always provided.

The good curriculum is being systematically enriched to broaden the range of memorable experiences and contributes well to the pupils’ personal development. Themes are a developing feature of linking subjects to promote interest and add to the richness of learning, such as during space and bible week when pupils are presented with mini-challenges to trigger interest and curiosity. The recent

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<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

introduction of 'Mathletics' is inspiring pupils to challenge their friends' skills and those of pupils from schools across the world. It is one of a number of initiatives to enable pupils to practise their skills across the curriculum in enjoyable ways.

The good care, guidance and support provided for pupils are quickly becoming strengths of the school's provision. Those pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable benefit from good partnership working with specialist support agencies. The school works hard to engage parents and carers positively to ensure that pupils make the most of the learning opportunities that the school provides. This includes supporting the increasing proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The school's vision and clarity of purpose have created a harmonious ethos which permeates the whole school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together and are instrumental in the constant drive to improve the quality of learning. Strengths and weaknesses are accurately identified, although the evaluation of the impact of teaching sometimes lacks rigour and actions taken do not always have the desired effect in the classroom. Staffing is increasingly more settled, with improving teaching exploiting pupils' positive attitudes and systematically eliminating the variations in the pattern of progress and achievement. As a result, good progress is becoming a more consistent feature of lessons and gaps in attainment are narrowing, especially in Key Stage 1.

The confidence and skills of staff are being successfully nurtured and this can be seen in staff's willingness to adopt more imaginative approaches that inspire and excite pupils' thinking. The good links with parents and carers are leading to greater involvement in their children's development. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and tackles discrimination rigorously whenever it occurs. The governing body has a good grasp of strengths and areas for development and holds the school to account in positive ways. Good partnerships with the local churches, the local network of schools, outside agencies and providers add to the richness of learning. The school adopts good procedures and practices for safeguarding which meet requirements and include elements of exemplary child protection practice. Community cohesion is promoted well, so that pupils have a good understanding and appreciation of diversity, locally, nationally and globally.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

All children settle confidently in the friendly nursery atmosphere. Although children generally arrive with skills as expected for their age, a few have speech and language weaknesses. Despite unsettled leadership and management, teachers, capably supported by teaching assistants, have been a driving force in maintaining a stimulating atmosphere where children's progress matters. As a consequence, children are making good progress with nearly all achieving the goals expected of them for their age, and with one-third exceeding those goals. Progress in the Nursery is frequently speedy, because an interesting range of activities motivates children's thinking, such as when the class went to feed the school hens with biscuits and broccoli, then collected and counted the freshly-laid eggs. Children are given the opportunity to select their own activities and they respond well to the praise and encouragement to pursue their curiosity, for example using role play to adopt jobs in their class shop. However, there are occasions when expectations of children's play, especially outdoors, are not challenging enough. A strength of the teaching observed is in the regular and systematic emphasis on children practising the use of sounds and letters. For example, a group of children were observed on the carpet totally absorbed picking letters from a bag, sounding the letter and correctly placing it alongside an everyday object with the same initial sound and letter. Regular observation and accurate assessment are reflected in each child's 'learning journey' folder. The positive involvement of parents and carers ensures their active engagement in the development of their children. Good levels of care and welfare are provided for children to make certain their learning requirements are met.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2



## Views of parents and carers

A much higher than average proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. Almost all parents and carers feel that the school keeps their children safe and a very large majority are happy with their children's experiences and appreciate the positive action taken by the headteacher. A few parents and carers wrote to express their concerns about their children's preparation for Key Stage 1 and the progress they make in this key stage. Inspectors found that unsettled staffing and children's progress and achievement issues were being positively addressed and managed by the headteacher. Settled staffing in Reception is leading to accelerating rates of children's progress and rising attainment and achievement.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Morpeth All Saints Church of England Aided First 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 inspector received 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 145 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	72	25	26	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	73	75	21	22	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	48	49	40	41	7	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	46	44	45	5	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	53	55	35	36	5	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	47	41	42	8	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	44	50	52	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)	49	51	42	43	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	51	41	42	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	42	46	47	3	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	43	44	42	43	7	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	53	55	32	33	7	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	62	29	30	3	3	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 is 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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"><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.**



18 November 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Morpeth All Saints Church of England Aided First School,  
Morpeth, NE61 3RD**

I want to thank you all for the friendly welcome that you gave the inspection team when we visited to see how well you were learning. We really enjoyed our time talking to you.

All Saints is a good and improving school, which has a number of strengths. We were impressed with the good relationships your school enjoys with your parents and carers and the way the staff continually encourage and support you to do as well as you can. This is helping to improve your keenness to learn and your attendance. We were pleased by your thoughtful behaviour and the good care taken of you. You clearly feel safe and happy because of this. You understand well the benefits that an active and healthy lifestyle can bring. You certainly take considerable pride in helping your school to improve.

The headteacher and the governing body are taking firm action to ensure that your school continues to improve. This can be seen in your quickening rates of progress and your improving skills, including in your writing and mathematics. We have asked the school to improve the quality of teaching further. We would like staff to expect even more of you and we have asked that you be given more opportunities to practise your literacy and numeracy skills and to explain your ideas. We want staff to provide more activities which can excite and interest you to test your thinking even more. We would also like staff to provide you with more detailed help to improve when they mark your work.

You can all play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can and by telling your teachers if work is too easy or too hard. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts  
Lead Inspector

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