

St Giles' Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115068
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	378993
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Cheryl Thompson

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	72
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Penny Doe
Headteacher	Jinnie Nichols
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed six lessons taught by four teachers, two of whom were temporary teachers. The work of teaching assistants supporting small groups of pupils and individuals was also observed. Meetings were held with staff, parents, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school evaluation documents, data on pupils' progress, external monitoring reports and development planning. Responses from questionnaires completed by 56 parents and carers were analysed, as well as those from pupils and staff.

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

- Is attainment, especially that of boys, improving at the end of Year 2?
- Does the school know what it needs to do to help pupils do even better in mathematics?

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average school serving the village and surrounding area. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. At two-fifths of the school roll, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. Within this high proportion there is a much higher-than-average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs and/or disabilities. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Pupils are taught in three mixed-age classes, with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage taught alongside pupils from Year 1. There is a higher-than-average number of pupils who leave and join the school part-way through their primary education with approximately two-thirds of these pupils having special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Since the last inspection, the number on roll has declined so that the school now has three classes, rather than four. Staffing difficulties have meant that there has been a turnover of teaching staff in one class. A permanent teacher for this class takes up post in January 2012. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has increased significantly. A new headteacher took over the school in September, 2010.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This school provides a satisfactory and improving education for its pupils. It has strengths in its provision for pupils' personal development.

The headteacher has established an incisive understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school's provision. She has a clear vision and high aspirations for the school's future which staff and the governing body share. School improvement planning is clearly focused on raising standards. The governing body is developing its role well and recognises that it needs to hold leaders and managers more fully to account for improving outcomes for pupils. The capacity to improve has been constrained by several factors. The reduction in the number of classes with resulting budget issues and changes of teaching staff have been barriers to promoting improvement in pupils' learning in a consistent way.

Pupils' attainment is broadly average. Their progress is satisfactory and improving. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. Pupils say they enjoy school, like their teachers and, especially, the range of school clubs. They make a good contribution to the school and local community. Older pupils are very keen to take on responsibility, for example, as buddies to the youngest children. Behaviour is satisfactory overall and improves as pupils move through the school.

Teaching is satisfactory. Its quality varies across the school because teachers are not always making the best use of their assessments to plan work to challenge all pupils. In mathematics, pupils are not provided with enough practical opportunities to consolidate their learning. The school has, correctly, identified the need to increase practical resources and make good use of them. Links with parents and carers are good and help them play an important role in such areas as helping with homework and ensuring high levels of attendance.

Good systems are used to identify groups or individuals whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The increasing number of pupils joining the school with complex learning needs and statements of special educational needs takes up almost all of the special educational needs co-ordinator's time. As a consequence, training for teaching assistants to enable pupils make good rather than satisfactory progress is not as frequent or as detailed as it needs to be. Pupils are known very well so any unhappiness or uncharacteristic behaviour is noted quickly and something is done about it. Pupils are very confident that they are safe at school and have a good

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understanding of how to keep themselves safe, fit and healthy.

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?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards further through improving teaching and use of assessment to a consistently good level by:
 - using outcomes of assessment more precisely to set aspirational targets for pupils and to plan lessons to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.
- Increase the effectiveness of the special educational needs co-ordinator by:
 - enabling the coordinator to monitor the work of teaching assistants working with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
 - using the outcomes of monitoring to provide training to increase further the impact of group work led by teaching assistants.
- Increase the rate of progress and raise standards further in mathematics by:
 - providing relevant and practical experiences to help pupils consolidate mathematical concepts
 - increasing the school's resources for practical mathematical activities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Attainment on entry to the Reception Year varies from year to year but it is generally around that expected for children's ages. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. School data, lesson observations and pupils' books indicate that Year 2 attainment is broadly average and, even though there have been improvements, attainment in mathematics lags a little behind that in English. Inspection evidence indicates that boys and girls do equally well. Pupils' progress from their starting points in Reception is satisfactory. The school's tracking data indicate that more pupils are making good progress than in the past. The general pattern of progress until recently had been of pupils making variable progress until they reached Years 5 and 6 at which point they made good progress and caught up on previous slower learning. Inspection evidence indicates progress is good for Year 1, variable for Years 2 and 3 due to changes of teaching staff, and good in Years 4, 5 and 6.

The school has worked very successfully to provide nurture groups to help small groups of boys manage their behaviour. Parents comment that behaviour in the school has improved considerably in the recent past. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils know the school's expectations of their behaviour. For example, behaviour in the music assembly and practice for the Christmas production was excellent. However, in a few lessons and at lunchtimes particularly, not all pupils are consistently meeting these expectations, especially when they have to wait for a long

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time for their dinner. Pupils say they like school and demonstrate this with their high level of attendance. They work together well, as in a Year 4, 5 and 6 lesson where they pooled their ideas for a persuasive argument for or against whether it is ever right to go to war. Pupils have a good understanding of local culture through visits and visitors. Through studies of countries such as India, Years 2 and 3 have a good understanding of how culture affects how people choose to live their lives but this is not a consistent feature across the school. Older pupils take pride in being members of the school council or a house captain. They know their opinions are valued and believe that they make a difference to the school. They have a satisfactory understanding of their personal targets and what they have to do to improve further. For their ages, pupils have a good understanding of safety with medicines, safety issues when using computers and always making sure friends or family know where they are. Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet and how to keep themselves fit.

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	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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

All lessons observed were securely satisfactory or good in terms of teaching and learning. The records of pupils' work in books demonstrate that there are differences in the quality of provision due to staff changes which has an impact on pupils' overall rate of progress as they move through the school. Lesson planning is detailed regarding the activities pupils are to undertake but, on occasions, there is insufficient detail to ensure that there is a clear understanding of what it is pupils are expected to have learned by the end of the lesson. Teachers always mark pupils' work. They

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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provide encouraging comments but are not routinely ensuring pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve their work, or providing them with time to do so. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils with statements of special needs and/or disabilities. This support helps the pupils manage their behaviour, keeps them safe and promotes their learning satisfactorily. Teaching assistants working with small groups of pupils with learning difficulties help them to complete tasks similar to their peers. However, teaching assistants do not always have the skills to recognise precisely how they can help pupils learn even more effectively.

The curriculum provides the necessary opportunities for pupils to study subjects, topics and themes that will help them as they move through their education. A good range of clubs and sporting activities enriches the curriculum well. Pupils are proud of their recent sporting achievements in rounders and cross country competitions. Relationships within the school are good and teachers manage their pupils well. The care, guidance and support for groups or individuals whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are good. These pupils receive good, sensitive support and encouragement to ensure good self-esteem and confident participation in all school activities.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The changes in staffing are acknowledged by school leaders and members of the governing body as a limiting factor in the improvement of the school. This matches parents' and carers' concerns about their children's education and progress. The headteacher, school staff and governing body are all focused on making sure the school is as effective as possible. Their work to this end has been related well to the wisely chosen improvement priorities but changes in staff have slowed the outcomes of this shared ambition. Nevertheless, the school has not stood still since the last inspection. As one parent wrote, 'the school and children have come a long way in the last four terms and it has been a joy to watch the journey'. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the newly-created work and play areas. The appointment of a learning development leader to coordinate the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that the provision for these pupils is well organised and that parents always have a member of staff to contact when the special educational needs co-ordinator is not at the school. The promotion of community cohesion is good. The school has worked successfully to involve the local

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community; pupils talk enthusiastically about helping at the half-termly lunches for local people and being part of the 'knitting circle' of local helpers.

Safeguarding of pupils is good and is monitored rigorously by governors to ensure that risk assessments are thorough and completed, where necessary, for individual pupils.

The equality of opportunity for pupils to achieve well in both academic and personal matters is satisfactory. The changing profile of the school's intake of pupils and increasingly diverse range of pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities, is being dealt with as well as is possible within the constraints of recruiting suitable support staff and the limitations of the premises. Strong partnerships with a wide range of agencies have a good impact on the specialised provision for groups or individuals whose circumstances may make them vulnerable as well as the support and information provided for their parents and carers. Recently established good partnerships with health professionals and the nearby children's centre enable the school to provide regular 'stay and play' sessions for parents and their pre-school-age children.

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 met	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision and progress in the Reception class are a success story for the school. The provision has improved considerably since the last inspection as a result of good leadership and management. Staff are constantly evaluating the provision and making changes for the better. Very effective partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants benefit children, especially those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, and promote their learning and well-being. Children are enthusiasts

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for learning, whether indoors or out and regardless of the activity. Children describe at length their exciting Forest School visits to Wiggery Wood. Early literacy and numeracy skills are taught well, and the teacher ensures that children have the time and opportunities to practise using these so that their knowledge is consolidated. For example, children were very keen to write to Santa in the role of a fairy tale character such as Baby Bear and were able to make a good attempt at asking for a 'cosy bed'.

Good links with parents and carers ensure that they have plenty of information about what their children have been doing at school and how they can reinforce learning at home.

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

There was an above average rate of questionnaire return. Parents and carers hold mixed views of the school. On one hand, many are pleased with its work, their children's progress and the improvements brought about by the headteacher. A few, however, had concerns. The theme of staff turnover and its impact were the main concern. In fact, these concerns are shared by the headteacher and governing body. They recognise the need to deal with inconsistencies in provision and pupils' progress and have recruited a full-time, experienced teacher from January 2012.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Giles' 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 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 72 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	71	14	25	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	73	15	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	30	54	20	36	5	9	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	48	20	36	4	7	4	7
The teaching is good at this school	31	55	19	34	5	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	26	46	23	41	7	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	41	28	50	3	5	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)	22	39	24	43	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	34	61	17	30	5	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	45	23	41	5	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	45	21	38	7	13	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	33	59	13	23	8	14	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	35	63	15	27	5	9	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.



12 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Giles' Church of England Primary School, Halstead, CO9 2RG

Thank you all for welcoming me to your school and for sharing your thoughts and ideas about it. This helped me to make the judgements about your school, which is providing you with a satisfactory education. The best things are that:

- you enjoy school and feel happy and safe
- you are well looked after, particularly those of you who have particular needs
- you make a good contribution to your school and local community.

There are some key areas where the school can improve. I have asked your headteacher, senior leaders and governors to:

- make sure that teaching is always at least good, and that your teachers always plan work to make you think hard so you make even better progress from your start in school to Year 6
- help your teaching assistants know even more about how you learn so they can spot when you have difficulties with your work and help you overcome them
- make sure you have more games and apparatus to use in mathematics lessons.

You already make a good contribution to the life of the school. You are positive about learning and I was impressed with your excellent behaviour in your music assembly. Please will you all try to behave as well as that all the time, especially at dinner times and at play.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson
Lead inspector

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