

Trinity Church of England Lower School, Aldwinckle

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Unique reference number | 121956 |
| Local authority | Northamptonshire |
| Inspection number | 380364 |
| Inspection dates | 14–15 May 2012 |
| Lead inspector | Mike Thompson |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | First |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–9 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 119 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Helen Mallett |
| Headteacher | Craig Charteris |
| Date of previous school inspection | 21 February 2007 |
| School address | Main Street Aldwinckle Kettering NN14 3EL |
| Telephone number | 01832 720239 |
| Fax number | 01832 720239 |
| Email address | head@trinity-ce-low.northants-ecl.gov.uk |

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Introduction

Inspection team

Mike Thompson

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector sampled teaching in eight lessons taught by five class teachers and a higher-level teaching assistant. He observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school's improvement planning and data showing the progress made by pupils. The inspector looked at the work in pupils' books, heard a sample of pupils read in Years 1 and 2, and talked to pupils about their views on many aspects of school life. He held meetings with the headteacher, members of the teaching staff, and the Chair of the Governing Body. His scrutiny of safeguarding procedures included a detailed evaluation of pupils' behaviour. The inspector analysed questionnaires returned by 63 parents and carers, 42 pupils in Key Stage 2 and four members of staff.

Information about the school

Trinity CE Lower School is smaller than an average-sized primary school. Its wide catchment area incorporates all of the surrounding villages and the outskirts of the small town of Thrapston. All of the pupils are White British. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those at the 'school action plus' stage of support or with a statement of special educational needs, is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average.

Aldwincle Playgroup, which is located on the school site, is managed by an external provider and is inspected separately.

The headteacher and all of the teaching staff have been appointed since the previous inspection. The headteacher took up his post 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 | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because teaching is good overall rather than outstanding. Although senior leaders' effective monitoring and evaluation of work in English and mathematics ensures that pupils achieve well in these subjects, those with leadership responsibilities in other subjects have yet to develop the full range of skills necessary to fulfil their roles.
- Most pupils make good progress in developing their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 4, pupils' progress over time is satisfactory. They have not benefited as much as others from changes made in the teaching of basic skills in reading and writing, particularly in Reception and Years 1 and 2. This is because the changes were introduced shortly after the headteacher's appointment, when these pupils were in Year 3. Attainment in Year 4 is in line with what is expected nationally for pupils of this age. In all other year groups, attainment is above national expectations.
- Most of the teaching is good. It is occasionally no better than satisfactory when teachers do not vary the levels of challenge to reflect pupils' different levels of attainment. In some instances the written targets for pupils to achieve are too vague, and teachers' marking of pupils' work is ineffective when teachers do not check that pupils have acted on their comments. Some outstanding practice is evident, where teachers use questions highly effectively to develop pupils' understanding and promote their skills as independent learners. These are not consistent features of lessons throughout the school.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are good. Pupils are attentive and keen to learn. Attendance rates are high.
- The headteacher gives strong leadership, particularly in making improvements in teachers' performance and providing relevant opportunities for their professional development.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By January 2013, improve the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that teachers always:
 - provide clear and challenging written targets for pupils to achieve in reading, writing and mathematics
 - set tasks and use carefully-planned questions in lessons that provide challenges for pupils of different levels of attainment
 - clearly identify improvements needed when marking pupils' work, and check that pupils respond to the comments made
 - promote pupils' skills as independent learners, through regular opportunities for them to assess their own work and independently determine what they need to do to improve it.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that leaders in subjects other than English and mathematics develop the full range of skills necessary to shape and improve pupils' learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Almost all of the parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire rightly consider that their children make good progress, and most of the pupils surveyed feel that they learn a lot in lessons.

Attainment on entry varies from year to year because of the small numbers of children admitted. It is currently in line with what is usually expected of four year-olds. Children make good progress in all areas of learning in the Reception class because they are consistently well taught, carefully assessed, and their development is carefully monitored. They join Year 1 with particular strengths in reading, writing and calculation. In Years 1 to 3, progress continues to be good in reading, writing and mathematics.

Phonics (the sounds represented by letters) is well taught. Pupils are grouped according to prior attainment for these daily sessions so that teaching can be closely focused and pupils suitably challenged. For example, in a lesson for pupils from Years 1 and 2, the good balance between clear teaching and well-planned opportunities for pupils to practise the skills taught resulted in good learning about the short and long sounds made by the letter 'i'. Attainment in reading is above average by the end of Year 2 and in line with national expectations by the end of Year 4. Most pupils make good use of their knowledge of phonics to help decipher unfamiliar words, reading with fluency and good expression. Less-able readers, although capable of breaking down unfamiliar words into separate sounds, lack skills

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in blending the sounds within words. A further factor that has adversely affected the progress of pupils in Year 4 has been a mid-year change of class teacher.

It was clear from lessons observed and the work in pupils' books that all groups of pupils, regardless of gender, ability or background, learn well. As a result of rigorous checks on pupils' progress, individuals who appear to be in danger of underachieving receive close scrutiny and extra help. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are well supported. This is because their individual needs are clearly identified, their learning plans set out clearly what they need to achieve, and their progress is closely monitored.

Quality of teaching

Most of the teaching is good or better, as reflected in the overwhelmingly positive views expressed by all parents and carers who completed the inspection questionnaires. Pupils are also generally positive, but some say that they do not know how well they are getting on. This is because written targets such as 'use punctuation effectively' provide no clear direction, and teachers do not consistently give clear enough feedback through their marking.

The best teaching has a positive impact on important aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly by prompting pupils to use their imagination and creativity in learning. For instance, a lesson in Year 1, based on characters in the story of 'Pumpkin Soup', provided pupils with much to excite and capture their imaginations. Pupils were captivated by the task of writing about a sequence of events. This was based on their role-play as forensic scientists as they previously investigated a 'crime scene' outside their classroom. The pupils responded outstandingly well to the teacher's clear expectations of the content of their writing. These expectations were skilfully adjusted, reflecting the teacher's accurate assessment of the pupils' prior attainment, and provided achievable challenges for all.

A similarly outstanding focus on developing pupils' independence as learners was observed in a mathematics lesson in Year 2 where pupils were challenged to investigate the properties of shapes. This required them to devise their own questions to enable shapes to be classified in different ways. In this session, the teacher's high-quality questioning contributed strongly to pupils' excellent development of skills and understanding. Such lessons show the way forward in terms of challenging pupils and developing their independent learning skills.

The planned curriculum has a generally positive impact on pupils' achievement. The teaching of phonics is now well established, and reading and writing skills are taught well. In Reception, the good range of well-planned, interesting and exciting activities provided, together with consistently effective teaching, results in good progress. Children's achievements are carefully and accurately assessed, although the recorded assessments are sometimes too descriptive and lack evaluative text.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is typically good. The views of parents, carers and pupils confirm this judgement. Teachers are consistent in managing pupils' behaviour, and pupils know very clearly what is expected of them. Behaviour for learning is generally good. Pupils are keen to learn and invariably pay careful attention to what their teachers have to say. Pupils know about the different forms bullying may take, but say that there are very few instances of bullying or unacceptable behaviour. The school's records support this view. There have been no instances of discriminatory or intolerant incidents recorded in the past three years. Whenever upsets occur, pupils feel that they are quickly and sensitively dealt with.

All of the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire say that their children feel safe in school and are well looked-after. Pupils clearly understand how to keep themselves and others safe, and safe practices such as the careful use of equipment were observed in all lessons. Pupils know the risks associated with the use of information and communication technology. When asked if they feel safe in school, pupils responded by quoting from the rights and responsibilities effectively promoted by the school. 'We have rights to be and feel safe at school, to be treated with respect, and to learn.' There is a strong moral code, and pupils clearly know right from wrong. They work and play together amicably, respect the feelings and ideas of others, and have a well-developed sense of fair play. Attendance has improved over the past three years and is consistently well above the national average for primary schools.

Leadership and management

The headteacher communicates a clear and ambitious vision for the school, and continuously looks for further improvement. This is evident from the changes made to the curriculum following his appointment. A move away from the fully integrated planning of English and mathematics within other subjects ensured that discrete teaching of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics is given high priority. The positive impact of this initiative on pupils' achievement is clear evidence of the school's good capacity for further improvement. The improvements made in the planning for mathematics are popular with the pupils. A number of those interviewed commented enthusiastically about their enjoyment of the challenges set for them. 'We have hard problems and it's fun' typified these comments. The school development plan, which sets out a clear agenda based on accurate self-evaluation, includes the right priorities and is being effectively implemented. The headteacher closely tracks the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. The good leadership and management of teachers' performance have resulted in improvements in the achievement of most groups of pupils.

This is a school that values all pupils equally, and in which discrimination has no place. It effectively delivers a curriculum that clearly upholds these values. In the Reception class, the curriculum provides a good range of activities covering all the required areas of learning, and a good balance between activities chosen by the

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children and those directed by the teacher. The many exciting learning experiences provided through the curriculum make a strong contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The qualities promoted are celebrated regularly. For example, the 'Always Club' is an end-of-term recognition of pupils who always try their best in everything they do. Weekly celebrations of pupils' personal achievements include mention in the 'Golden Book', which then results in an invitation to tea with the headteacher.

Teachers with leadership roles in subjects other than English and mathematics are inexperienced in carrying out these roles. They are in the early stages of using data on pupils' progress to help inform their overview of provision. The governing body is well organised. Its members take a keen interest in the work of the school, and bring a wide range of skills to good effect in holding the school to account for its actions. Procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils are robust, and the governing body is vigilant in ensuring that policies to ensure the safeguarding of pupils are rigorously enforced.

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 | 54 | 42 | 2 | 2 |
| Primary schools | 14 | 49 | 32 | 6 |
| Secondary schools | 20 | 39 | 34 | 7 |
| Special schools | 33 | 45 | 20 | 3 |
| Pupil referral units | 9 | 55 | 28 | 8 |
| All schools | 16 | 47 | 31 | 6 |

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Attendance: | the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance. |
| Behaviour: | how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Floor standards: | the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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: | inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. |
| 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. |
| Safety: | how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning. |

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.

16 May 2012

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Trinity Church of England Lower School, Aldwincle, Kettering NN14 3EL

I would like to thank you very much for being so helpful when I came to visit your school. I really enjoyed meeting you, looking at your work and hearing your views, including through the questionnaires some of you completed. Your parents told me that you go to a good school, and I agree.

Here are some of the things that your school does best.

- You learn well in lessons and make good progress because you are taught well.
- You develop your personal skills well and, most importantly, you behave well. This is important in helping you to become good citizens in the future.
- You told me that you enjoy and learn a lot from the interesting and exciting activities your teachers plan for you.
- You also said that you feel safe. This is because all of the adults in your school look after you well.
- The people who run your school are doing a good job.

Your headteacher agrees that some things need improving to help you to make even more progress, so in future this is what will happen.

- Your teachers will make sure that the targets in your Target Books are always very clear. They will be giving you work that always makes you think hard. They will mark it more clearly so that you know exactly what you have to do to improve, and will check that you have made the improvements they expect. Your teachers will also help you to become more skilled in organising your own learning and deciding what you need to do to improve.
- Most of your teachers have only been in charge of subjects for a short time, so I want them to find out more about the best ways of doing this job.

You can play your part in helping the school to become even better. The best way to do this is to carry on trying hard to achieve the targets your teachers set for you, and to act on the comments that your teachers make when they mark your work.

Yours sincerely

Mike Thompson
Lead inspector

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