

Southam St James (Voluntary Aided) Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	125727
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	381119
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2012
Lead inspector	Mary Davis

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Valerie Copley
Headteacher	Hilary Wankling
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2009
School address	Tollgate Road Southam CV47 1EE
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	14–15 June 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mary Davis

Additional Inspector

Damian Booth

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed twelve lessons and six teachers, spending seven hours in classrooms. They held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff, and spoke to parents and carers. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at: policies; development planning; data related to the tracking of pupils' progress; senior leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning; safeguarding documents; pupils' work; and 78 questionnaires from parents and carers, together with those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Southam St James Church of England Primary School is a below average-sized primary school. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average and very few speak English as an additional language. None are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. A well-below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has experienced some turbulence in staffing since its last inspection.

Beechwood Childcare based within the school grounds, provides before- and after-school care. It is independently run and inspected separately.

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 yet outstanding because teaching and learning are not consistently good or outstanding, and middle leadership requires further development. However, the school has improved strongly since its previous inspection.
- Achievement is good. Attainment is above average, including in reading. Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and is improving in Key Stage 1. Rates of progress in Key Stage 2 are well above average. Pupils show great enjoyment in lessons, are keen to contribute their ideas and to do their best. They are developing well as independent learners.
- Teaching is good. Teachers plan well to meet pupils' individual needs. There is inconsistency in a small minority of lessons when the pace of learning is not quick enough, or when teachers provide insufficient opportunities for pupils to respond to questioning, both verbally and in the marking of their work. Very occasionally, tasks are not explained clearly enough to enable all groups of pupils to work independently.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils' behaviour is often exemplary; they are considerate and respectful. Pupils say that they feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe. There is very little bullying and pupils are confident that adults will support them if they cannot resolve a situation themselves. Pupils show a mature understanding of the very small minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties, for whom the school provides outstanding support.
- Leadership and management are good. Leaders provide good support to enable teachers to improve their practice. Senior leaders recognise the need to build the capacity of middle leaders to enable them to monitor the provision effectively and drive improvement. The curriculum is good, providing relevant and memorable experiences that support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education well.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share existing outstanding practice to ensure that the overall quality of teaching is consistently good or outstanding by:
 - ensuring that learning consistently proceeds at a fast pace
 - consistently providing pupils with opportunities for pupils to reflect upon and respond to questioning, both verbally and in the marking of their work
 - ensuring that pupils consistently understand tasks set so that they can work independently.

- Further build the capacity of middle leaders by providing increased opportunity for them to monitor and evaluate the provision, enabling them to drive improvement in their areas of responsibility.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter Reception with levels of skill and understanding that are typically in line with expectations for their age. They make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage and establish good learning and listening skills, playing and cooperating well together. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 has fluctuated over recent years, but is now improving strongly as the result of increased stability of teaching staff. Attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 2 in 2011 was significantly above national averages in both English and mathematics. The current Year 6 cohort, who also suffered from staffing turbulence early on in the key stage, have made up lost ground as the result of the current high quality of teaching. Recent assessments indicate that they too have made better than average progress from their starting points. Attainment in reading throughout the school is above average; the youngest children are able to sound out words successfully and pupils in Year 6 read with enthusiasm and show enjoyment of literature.

Pupils are excited by their learning and often become engrossed in the tasks set. They display a high level of independence as a result of the clear targets that are set for them and which, as they get older, they increasingly set for themselves. Pupils are keen to identify when they have met these targets and have them 'signed off' by their teacher. In outstanding lessons, pupils rise to the high expectations set by their teachers and take responsibility for their own learning. For example, in a Year 2 lesson pupils researched and recorded facts about mini-beasts using the resources provided. They were able to demonstrate advanced understanding of such learning skills as 'skim reading' and the differences between the requirements for writing notes as opposed to full sentences. Almost all parents and carers rightly expressed the view that their children enjoy their learning. They also expressed positive views about their children's progress.

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Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well included and provided for in lessons, particularly through the expert support provided by teaching assistants who are a strength of the school's provision. As a result, these pupils make progress that is equally good as their peers. Very occasionally, teachers do not explain or demonstrate tasks clearly enough for lower attaining pupils and, as a consequence, they find the work too difficult to tackle without support. The very small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language or who are known to be eligible for free school meals make equal progress to their peers as a result of the support they receive.

Quality of teaching

Inspectors concur with the view expressed by the vast majority of parents and carers, that typically the quality of teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. Tasks are well planned and resourced to meet pupils' individual needs, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers' high expectations ensure that higher attaining pupils are appropriately challenged and they also plan well to ensure that tasks are meaningful and engaging. For example, Year 1 were excited about recounting their trip to an outdoor centre where they searched for mini-beasts in the woods; in their numeracy lesson they were keen to share the facts they had learnt, then adding the number of spider's legs to those of woodlice.

Reading is taught systematically across the school and activities are planned to ensure that boys develop a love of reading and writing. For example, in the Reception class children were able to label pictures of sporting equipment having first sounded out 'bat' and 'ball', and learned to recognise more complex words such as 'football'. Teachers across the school provide many opportunities where pupils can work together in groups or with spelling partners, encouraging their social development. They also provide opportunities to reflect and make decisions about issues that affect them.

In a small minority of lessons the pace of learning slows. Occasionally, the highest attaining pupils have to wait for others to finish and there are not enough opportunities to move them on quickly once they display understanding. At times, pupils do not have enough thinking time once they have been asked a question or sufficient opportunities to respond to teachers' comments in their marked work by, for example, practising or re-drafting in order to achieve their targets. Typically, however, teachers use questioning well to evaluate learning and plan future lessons to address the gaps they identify in pupils' learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

A minority of parents and carers expressed concern that the poor behaviour of some pupils was jeopardising their child's learning and that the school was not managing behaviour well. Inspectors explored this concern very thoroughly and judged behaviour in lessons and around the school to be good and the school's procedures

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for managing behaviour to be very effective. They support the school's view that all pupils need to learn how to resolve conflict and to calm and support those with difficulty in managing anger. Pupils told inspectors that, although they are concerned when their lessons are very occasionally disrupted, they understand that some pupils have behaviour issues and require the same degree of care that they show to disabled pupils. They told inspectors that incidents of poor behaviour have significantly decreased over recent months.

Pupils say how much they value the way in which they are supported to resolve conflicts themselves and having the opportunity to apologise to each other after a disagreement. In discussion, pupils identified different types of bullying and how to prevent it happening. They told inspectors that the school deals sensitively and effectively with rare incidents of bullying and that racism is not tolerated. They say that the school keeps them safe and show a good understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation, including the use of the internet and mobile telephones. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors, and kind and considerate to each other. They show respect for those with different beliefs or backgrounds to their own and enjoy learning about different cultures from their peers and from visits and visitors. Attendance rates are consistently above average and the school provides good support for the very few families of pupils whose attendance rates fall below average.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and her senior team have been unstinting in their drive for improvement since the previous inspection and show a good capacity to develop further. They have ensured that the quality of teaching has improved, and have deployed the strongest teachers appropriately to address the disruption to learning caused by recent staffing turbulence. Teachers are held to account for pupils' achievement through regular progress meetings; good practice is shared and mentoring and training provided where required. The school recognises the need to develop the capacity of middle leaders, and to provide increased opportunity for them to share in school self-evaluation and to drive improvement in their areas of responsibility.

Leaders have been robust in managing pupils with behaviour difficulties and exclusion rates, which have been high in the past, have declined dramatically. Outstanding care and nurture is provided to support those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, enabling them to be fully included in all school activities. Pupils are well-known and cared for as individuals, and the school ensures that all have equal opportunity and that there is no discrimination.

The governing body is well organised and shares leaders' ambition for the school to 'embed excellence everywhere.' They take an active role in the school and their good understanding of assessment data enables them to provide appropriate support and challenge for the school's leaders. Their evaluation of the school's provision includes actively seeking the opinions of parents and carers and of the school council. They

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ensure the safety of the school site and that safeguarding arrangements meet the government's current requirements.

The school works hard to engage parents and carers, providing opportunities such as regular 'congratulations' assemblies, when they are welcomed into school. Parents and carers of the Reception class children were particularly keen to tell inspectors how much they value opportunities to support their child's learning and their appreciation of the Early Year Foundation Stage provision.

The good curriculum provides well to ensure pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Frequent opportunities are provided for outdoor learning, enabling pupils to appreciate the natural world and to develop their role within their local and international communities. Cross-curricular topics enable pupils to develop their creativity and literacy skills, for example, showing their understanding of historical characters by writing their imaginary diaries. Pupils were proud to contribute their artwork, projected onto Buckingham Palace during the Queen's Jubilee celebrations.

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.



18 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southam St James (Voluntary Aided) Church of England Primary School, Southam, CV47 1EE

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school for its recent inspection. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing all that you do.

You go to a good school. You are making good progress and your attainment is above that of pupils nationally by the time you reach Year 6. You told us that you enjoy your learning. You understand your targets and are keen to identify when you have reached them. The school is well run and leaders have worked hard to ensure that teaching is good and that you progress well. We have asked them to ensure that you always experience teaching of the highest quality. They can do this by making sure that no time is wasted and that you can move on quickly once you understand. We have asked teachers to always explain your tasks clearly so that you can tackle them without help. You can help by telling them when you don't understand. We have also asked them to provide you with enough time to think about your answers to questions, and to respond to the comments teachers make when they mark your books.

You behave well, are confident that the school will keep you safe and you know how to keep yourselves safe. We were particularly impressed by the way in which you work together in lessons and support each other. Your attendance is above average. You told inspectors that you enjoy your lessons because the curriculum is fun and enables you to develop your own ideas and be creative. The leaders are making sure you continue to learn well, develop well as young people and ensuring your safety. We have asked them to provide more opportunity for middle leaders to check that you are learning well. You can help them by continuing to work hard.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mary Davis
Lead inspector

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