



# St Alphege Church of England Infant and Nursery School

Inspection Report

Better  
education  
and care

**Unique Reference Number** 104090  
**LEA** Solihull  
**Inspection number** 277067  
**Inspection dates** 2 May 2006 to 3 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** David Driscoll AI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	New Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Solihull
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		West Midlands B91 3DW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 7050443
<b>Number on roll</b>	280	<b>Fax number</b>	0121 7040514
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Ron Herd
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 June 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Joanna Slough

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Although only of average size for a primary school, St Alphege is very large for a school that caters only for nursery and infant pupils. It serves a relatively affluent area of Solihull, although more pupils are coming from further afield every year. The pupils are representative of those in most other primary schools, although standards on entry to the school are above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is a little below average as is the proportion from minority ethnic groups.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides an outstanding education and value for money, a judgement in keeping with its managers' own assessment. Pupils of all ages make excellent progress, both in terms of their academic standards and their personal development. They leave the school with standards that are exceptionally high. Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Pupils make excellent progress as a result of exemplary teaching and start Year 1 with standards that are well above average for their age. As in all years, there is a strong commitment from staff to ensuring that all pupils reach their full potential and, in pursuit of this, staff have excellent procedures for assessing, tracking and monitoring children's progress. Parents rightly have a very high opinion of the school and the way it is run. Teaching is of the highest quality because staff know the pupils so well. They carefully match their teaching methods to ways that they know will help individuals learn best. Pupils are exceptionally happy at school because they are very well cared for and looked after. Despite the outstanding quality of provision, the headteacher and all staff are not complacent. They work very closely with parents to identify even the smallest areas where improvements can be made. Their efforts are always successful. The excellent use of data ensures that managers can check the school's progress over time, and ensure that it continues to go from strength to strength, as it has since it was last inspected.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

This is an outstanding school in all respects, with no areas for improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils make outstanding progress, regardless of their background or ability. When children start in the Nursery their standards are generally above those expected for their age. They develop a wide range of skills with excellent progress in their independence and listening skills. Children in the Reception classes make excellent progress, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and in emotional, social and personal development. Most start Year 1 with standards that are well above those expected for their age. Many engage in meaningful discussions with adults, are able to write independently, and make good attempts at spelling. By the end of Year 2 pupils have made outstanding progress and leave with standards that are exceptionally high. In most years more than half the pupils reach Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics. Results in 2005 were not quite as high as those in previous years, but still represent excellent progress for the pupils concerned. Of the very small number of pupils who made only satisfactory progress, the great majority had not attended the school's Nursery. Each year the school meets or exceeds its targets for each subject, despite having set targets that are much higher than those that would usually be expected, given pupils' standards on joining the school.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school. As one said, 'We love it here, we do lots and it's fun!' Their social skills develop significantly as they move through the school; pupils are given increasing responsibility via the school council and they rise to the challenge enthusiastically. For example, they suggested ways of reducing the mess left after lunch by introducing a sticker reward system for each table. This has been very effective. Pupils feel proud of what they have achieved and are also very clear that they can influence decisions made in the school.

Relationships between pupils are excellent, as are their behaviour and attitudes. They leave the school confident and with a clear understanding of right and wrong. Bullying and racism are exceedingly rare. Pupils know the things they can do to help themselves and others stay safe. Pupils regularly celebrate the diversity of faiths and cultures which are represented locally and in school. Developing an awareness of different cultures is a natural part of the daily curriculum and so pupils are very aware of different traditions, religions, music and art, for example. Pupils accept and understand the differences they see around them and are very respectful towards each other, whatever their background or particular needs. Pupils throughout the school are taught the importance of healthy lifestyles especially well. All pupils understand the importance of regular exercise and eating healthily. The improvement of their basic skills equips them exceptionally well for life in the future. Attendance has improved dramatically because of several measures which include clear guidelines to parents about not taking holidays in term time and reward systems using local businesses for good attendance. Attendance is now well above the national average.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 1

Teaching is outstanding, so pupils in all years learn at a much faster rate than usually seen. The exceptional quality and accuracy of the assessment of pupils leads to staff knowing the pupils very well indeed. They know the methods that work best with individuals, so use several different ways of teaching very demanding topics.

'Directions', for example, are taught using plans, lists, computer simulations and physically walking a route, all at the same time, with each method matched to the individual pupil. In a short time, all pupils have a firm grasp of the concept and the language involved, and understand when they can apply the concept. Pupils thoroughly enjoy being given difficult work to do. Staff are relaxed and confident with their pupils. Teachers readily accept corrections, suggested by Pupils, if they make an 'error', such as calling a vertex a corner. Teachers and support staff are exceptionally good at spotting the one or two pupils who may not have completely understood what is being taught, helped by pupils' selfconfidence in being able to say that they do not understand. Staff are swift to react in such instances, changing their method or giving

extra time to individuals after lessons have finished. Pupils are routinely asked how to make the work harder next lesson, and they always come up with ideas. The excellent resources, including a purpose built soft playroom and a well landscaped outdoor play area, contribute to the excellent learning in the Foundation Stage.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding in many respects. It is extremely well planned so that from one year to another, as well as during each year, pupils make excellent progress. The curriculum is very varied but there is much reinforcement so that, for example, pupils are encouraged to look at spellings during their mathematics lessons, while during literacy lessons they develop an understanding of biology and the natural world. The work is carefully matched to the very varied needs of the pupils and teachers know pupils extremely well so that each pupil is encouraged to improve in different ways. Almost all pupils participate in the extensive variety of clubs and activities beyond the school day, many of which are sport based and help pupils to understand about healthy living. The school also has a very good range of residential activities which many pupils participate in and which help them to develop both socially and physically. When interviewed, several pupils said that these trips were some of the things they loved about the school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school cares for and supports pupils extremely well. The school encourages parents to form a partnership with them which in turn encourages high expectations and achievements. For example, the school recognised that several parents wanted more help with supporting their children with mathematics, so it developed an information leaflet to aid them. Advice on everything, from dealing with medical conditions to academic performance, is easily accessible in the school. Parents also regularly help out in classrooms, so raising their awareness of how best their children learn. Children starting Nursery settle in well because of the highly effective induction procedures which include visits to their pre-school play groups, interviews with parents and staggered admissions. Academic guidance is very good. Pupils are very clear about how they are performing and they are regularly asked to evaluate their own work or someone else's so that they develop a very good sense of how to improve. Teachers know pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses exceptionally well so all pupils have very specific targets and make excellent progress. Child protection and health and safety procedures are very robust. The school has adapted its buildings to be fully accessible. The school works successfully with outside agencies to help its pupils and parents get the support they need.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. The key to the school's success is the way that parents, governors and all staff work as a team. The vital role of parents in this team has been supported exceptionally well, with clear guidance on the best ways that parents can support their children's learning both at school and at home. The parents' council and twice yearly questionnaires provide a highly detailed picture of parents' views. Policies are clear for all to understand, because they are concise and written specifically for the school; all are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The outstanding assessment systems lead to a school that knows the progress made by every pupil and is able to pinpoint exactly what needs to be done to improve standards still further. The headteacher is expert with the data and knows the exceptional nature of the school's performance, and the reasons behind it. Nevertheless, there is a complete absence of complacency as the school continually strives to improve. Boys' reading, for example, was not as good as girls', so the school overhauled the way that reading was taught and the resources available. Progress in reading is now outstanding, both for boys and girls. The key issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with so well that they are now considerable strengths.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Children I have asked Mrs Slough to read this to you after our visit to your school. 'This is the best school in the universe' was one of the first things that you told me. The second thing was how upset one of you had been when you were ill, because you could not come to school. I can't tell you if this really is the best school in the universe, because I haven't been to them all, but I do know that your school is very special indeed. You have so many grown-ups doing all they can to make sure you are happy and learning lots of new things. Everybody helps. The cooks make sure you have healthy food that is delicious; the cleaners keep the school looking beautiful and the grownups who teach you make sure you know how to work and play together. They know that you love being asked to do really hard things, so they give you more and more difficult work as you get older. You know that if you get stuck or upset, there is always someone there to help. The grown-ups also help your mums and dads to teach you even more when you are at home. Usually, we can find things that could be even better, but, like you, we are finding it very hard to think of anything that could be done that is not already happening. Your reading, writing and maths are really, really good. You have very good manners and know how to talk to grown-ups. You love coming to school, because it is such fun. We wish we could visit you more often, because you made us feel as happy as you do. Thank you so much for helping us with our work. Best wishes Mr Driscoll (Lead inspector) PS. If you did your spelling homework on the back of the form we sent to your parents, please tell me and I will send a copy back to you!