



St Luke's Church of England Controlled Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115082
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279510
Inspection dates 12 January 2006 to 13 January 2006
Reporting inspector Ms. Ruth Frith LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		CO5 0SU
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01621815456
Number on roll	288	Fax number	01621819887
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Julian Wyncoll
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Wendy Enguell

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 12 January 2006 - 13 January 2006	Inspection number 279510
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school, situated in the village of Tiptree, where a significant number of pupils come from outside the school's immediate catchment area. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The percentage receiving free school meals is below the national average. Children's attainment on entry is below the local authority average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average and a small number have statements for special educational needs. Five new teachers started at the school at the beginning of the current academic year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where the individual child lies at the heart of all its work. Staff meet the pastoral needs of pupils well and are working hard to drive up academic standards. Many pupils find learning difficult. The school strives to counter this through the provision of a rich curriculum, stimulating teaching and effective support and guidance. Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good and children quickly adapt to school life. Standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly average, which indicates good progress. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly satisfactory, which indicates good progress from pupils' below average attainment entry to school. Teaching and learning are good overall. Although the vast majority of teaching is good and occasionally outstanding, teaching is not so effective in lower Key Stage 2, where pupils' learning slows. This affects the progress made over time from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2. The curriculum is stimulating and makes pupils enthusiastic and keen to learn. Staff are developing pupils' spoken and written language but more needs to be done. Although pupils know they should work hard to improve, they are frequently unsure about what they should do. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The enthusiasm and commitment of staff and governors, together with the headteacher's and deputy headteacher's good leadership, show that the school has a good capacity to improve. Staff have a clear understanding of what they do well and have identified appropriate priorities for improvement. These arise from the good self-evaluation procedures, the results of which closely correlate with the inspection findings. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching at lower Key Stage 2 so that pupils' good progress is maintained throughout their time in school. - Improve the target-setting process for pupils so that they more clearly understand what they need to do to improve their work. - Make greater use of literature to extend pupils' spoken and written language.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From below-average starting points, pupils make good progress and achieve well overall. Children respond well to the good quality teaching they receive when they start school and settle quickly to learning. Pupils continue to do well so that by the time they reach the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. Pupils in the current Year 2 are well challenged and are likely to meet the realistic targets set. However, in Years 3 and 4, the pupils' rate of learning slows. Evidence indicates that there is a legacy of underachievement over several years for pupils in these year-groups. Pupils' progress in Years 5 and 6 is good and this partly compensates for weaknesses in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school. Staff have recognised the need to raise achievement in writing following the disappointing test results last

year and are ensuring that pupils are better prepared to tackle the specific tasks set. There have been significant improvements in pupils' standards in information and communication technology due to good leadership, improved resources, a richer curriculum and better teaching. The most capable pupils generally receive sufficiently challenging work, which results in good achievement, as shown by the good number who attained the higher levels in the national tests last year. Pupils with learning difficulties usually achieve well because their needs are quickly identified and good support is given by the class teachers and skilled support staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils arrive at school punctually and settle quickly to work. Most approach learning with enjoyment and confidence. They develop mature attitudes to healthy living and talk confidently about sensible eating, drinking and regular exercise. Older pupils make willing and helpful contributions to the school and the wider community as play leaders and librarians and through projects that support charities or local recreation amenities. They have social and team-work skills that promise sound future well-being. These are applied well in lessons and in activities, such as helping the school's visitors and the operation of a thriving and effective school council. In recognition of potential hazards, many of the older pupils achieve cycling proficiency awards and some also learn about basic first aid. Though there are occasional exceptions, the behaviour of the pupils in lessons and around the school is good. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Most develop sound self-esteem even though many start school with low personal aspirations and ambitions. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and a healthy interest in, and respect for, the range of individuals, groups and activities in the local and wider community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Overall, teaching and learning are good, though pupils in Years 3 and 4 make slower progress than those in other year groups because the teaching is more variable. The senior management is working effectively to improve teaching in these year groups. Many pupils do not find learning easy and sometimes believe they cannot achieve high standards. Teachers work very hard to counter this and provide them with wide-ranging opportunities to help them become interested and motivated. Good relationships and a safe ethos in classrooms provide a basis for the pupils' learning where pupils can try out ideas and make mistakes without being ridiculed. Pupils speak warmly about adults in school being friendly and supportive. Most teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and plan their lessons well. Objectives for lessons are shared and pupils reflect effectively on their learning. Teachers know their pupils well and track progress

carefully. Underachievement is picked up quickly and appropriate steps are taken, such as identifying pupils for booster groups. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are provided for well and make good progress. Most pupils feel their work is marked well and teachers give an indication of what could be improved. Pupils are less clear about their targets, which aim to raise standards over time. For example, they know that they have to improve in mathematics and writing, but do not specifically know how to do this. Occasionally, their targets are written using vocabulary that the pupils do not understand. The school recognises that it needs to make greater use of literature to help pupils use a wider range of language, including formal Standard English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Recent improvements have ensured that it meets statutory requirements and the needs of pupils. The school has focused on making topics more exciting and links between subjects more relevant. Good use of speaking and listening activities, art and drama enhance many subjects. The Foundation Stage curriculum for children in the Reception classes is good and the effective planning ensures that children take full advantage of learning through discovery and investigation. Senior managers are strongly committed to widening the experiences of all pupils and to providing a good range of visits and visitors. These enrich pupils' appreciation of the arts, history and the wider world. A good range of extra-curricular activities helps pupils develop a healthy lifestyle and learn new skills, such as chess and French. However, some inequality of provision is caused by having three classes accommodated in temporary classrooms quite a distance from the main school building.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school makes good and strongly inclusive provision to support pupils' development. Efficient day-to-day care is based on good communication and relationships between pupils, staff and parents. The school recognises potential hazards quickly and uses its safeguarding arrangements systematically. Risk assessments are conducted routinely. Staff recruitment, training and management reflect up-to-date requirements for child protection. The school's arrangements for assessment enable the staff and senior managers to share information about pupils' attainment. They refresh this frequently, track the progress of individuals and identify pupils who have specific learning needs or who risk under-achievement. Helpful measures are introduced by directing the work of teaching assistants towards particular subjects or groups of pupils. Parents are kept well-informed about their children's progress. The school is approachable and helpful in resolving difficulties through the use of the 'Lavender Room', where pupils receive respite, guidance and support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported effectively by the deputy headteacher, leads the school well. There is a strong sense of shared purpose and teamwork throughout. New staff have been absorbed quickly into the school community because of these mutual values. Strategic planning is good and reflects the views of parents, teachers, governors and pupils. The school has clarity of purpose and a sustained and determined approach to raising standards, aided by the staff's good use of external experts. Gains in academic standards are, however, hard won. School data show that pupils are now making good progress in the reception year, Key Stage 1 and upper classes in Key Stage 2. There is an effective and appropriate strategy which is now tackling the slower progress in lower Key Stage 2. The senior leadership team has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to extend the range and quality of provision. Members of the team act as good role models. A particular skill of the headteacher lies in devolving leadership and encouraging the professional development of individual members of the school team. Finance is managed well and the school provides good value for money. A significant change in the governing body recently has meant that a number of governors are still developing their understanding of the role. Nevertheless, they are very committed and supportive, and several are prepared to challenge appropriately, when needed. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and its capacity for further improvement is good.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

Thank you very much for making us feel welcome in your school, for talking to us and for answering our questions. We think St. Luke's is a good school and particularly like the following: All staff work very well together as a team and want you to do as well as you can. They give you interesting work which helps you to do well. They enjoy teaching you. - You enjoy school a lot and are keen to do good work. You like the rewards you are given that recognise how well you are doing. - You behave well and are kind to each other. You work and play together well. - Staff look after you well and you feel safe in school. Mrs Enguell and the staff work hard and want to do the best for you. They have lots of ideas which will help the school to improve even further. - They will make sure that the quality of teaching is good throughout the school so that you always make good progress. - They will provide clearer and more focused targets so that you fully understand what you should do to improve your work. - They will make more use of different types of literature so that you learn how to speak and write using a wider range of exciting and appropriate words. Thank you once again and good luck in the future.