



The Cathedral Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Chelmsford

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115289
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279564
Inspection dates 6 July 2006 to 7 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Andrew Matthews AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Victoria Road
School category	Voluntary aided		CM1 1PA
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01245 354459
Number on roll	283	Fax number	01245 348991
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev.Peter Judd
Date of previous inspection	22 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr. William Hill

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Cathedral school is larger than most primary schools. It is oversubscribed and serves a wide catchment area in the Chelmsford area. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. A very small number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. Attainment on entry is above average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools and Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection team agrees with the school's evaluation that its effectiveness is good. The Cathedral school is a good school and has some outstanding features. It provides good value for money and makes effective use of its resources. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and has well focused plans to continue to improve its provision. Teaching is good throughout the school and pupils do a wide range of interesting and varied work. Lessons build effectively on the pupils' previous learning. Consequently, pupils make good progress. They get off to a fine start in Reception and standards are consistently above national expectations before they reach Year 1. By the end of Year 6, standards are well above average and particularly high in mathematics, music and art. However, too few pupils reach high standards in writing and there are some inconsistencies in the way that teachers mark pupils' work. There is an outstanding atmosphere of friendship, peace and security for pupils and staff. This is a very happy place for pupils to learn and grow up in. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They speak very enthusiastically of the many positive features of the school. The great majority of parents are highly supportive, as was evident from a very well attended open afternoon held during the inspection. The leadership and management of the school are good because of the clear strategic direction given by the headteacher, senior staff and governors. The school works hard and effectively to develop all aspects of its provision for the benefit of the pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly monitored but more rigour is needed in the way that pupils' progress is tracked. The school is in a strong position to continue the many improvements made since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use relevant assessment information to track pupils' progress more regularly towards their end of year targets. - Increase the number of pupils reaching the higher standards in writing. - Ensure teachers' marking informs pupils how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall. Children enter the Reception classes with standards that are above average and make good progress there and through the school. Attainment is consistently high at the end of Year 2 and, by the end of Year 6, results are well above average, being exceptionally high in mathematics. Evidence from recent national tests show that the unconfirmed results for 2006 have improved on recent years and exceed the challenging targets set. There has been a particular improvement in English, although the most able pupils are still not reaching high enough standards in writing. This is rightly a priority in the school's development plan. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT) and by the end of Year 6 standards are high. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well and make good progress because of the good quality support they receive. Many pupils achieve very

high standards in music and the quality of the choir's singing is outstanding. The school's environment is enhanced by the very high quality art on display.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils are self-assured, talk sensibly about their work and are proud of their achievements. They are sensitive to the feelings of others. Behaviour is excellent and pupils of all ages greatly enjoy school. They are well motivated and are keen to learn. They say there is no bullying, only minor disagreements. Attendance is well above average. Pupils have a good understanding about how to lead healthy lifestyles and take part in regular exercise. They have an extremely good knowledge of how to look after themselves and stay safe. They feel secure in school, saying it is 'like a second home'. Multi-cultural week and visits to the Islamic Centre and the Hindu temple help pupils to gain a good understanding of different beliefs and cultures. Visits, for example to the Isle of Wight and to Holland, promote their social and cultural development exceptionally well. The school council provides opportunities for pupils to air their views and decisions made have a strong impact on school life. The refurbishment of the toilets was a direct result of a school council request. Many activities are provided to develop economic awareness. Pupils have very good basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills which give them a strong foundation for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work output. In the best lessons the pace is brisk and pupils are challenged to improve their skills and understanding throughout. For example, in an outstanding Year 1/2 literacy lesson, all groups of pupils were given interesting and challenging tasks and were highly motivated to complete them. However, in a small minority of lessons the teaching is not so imaginative and pupils are not inspired to do their best. Throughout the school, relationships are very good, and pupils respond very well in lessons to teachers and the experienced teaching assistants. Resources such as the new interactive whiteboards are used well to present teaching in an interesting way to motivate the pupils. For example, the use of video clips to enhance the start of literacy lessons is motivating pupils to produce helping produce high quality work. Whilst assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, in some classes the teachers' marking does not give sufficient guidance to pupils about how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, with some outstanding features. There is a clear focus on developing and extending literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The well-planned provision in the Foundation Stage enables children to make a good start to their school life and to make good progress. Throughout the school, the teachers plan a wide-ranging and interesting programme of work which is enhanced by visits made and visitors coming in to school. Enrichment days and weeks, and well-attended residential activity weeks make a very good contribution to the pupils' personal development. Provision for music is exceptionally strong and an emphasis on developing pupils' sporting skills encourages them to develop healthy and safe lifestyles. For example, all pupils have swimming lessons from Reception onwards and standards are high. A wide range of opportunities, including French, art, sports and music, are offered as extra-curricular activities. These are much appreciated by the pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a secure learning environment. Pupils report that they feel well protected. There is a good personal, social, health education and citizenship programme which includes lessons on drugs awareness, and sex and relationships education. Child protection procedures are in place and are understood by all staff. Governors and staff carry out rigorous risk assessments and there is good attention to health and safety requirements. Pupils are confident that the adults will help them if they have a problem. Target setting for individual pupils is rightly being further developed as some pupils are unsure about their targets and the timescale for reaching them. Knowledgeable teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils are full of praise and appreciation for the commitment of all staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of the school's leadership and management has improved in many areas since the last inspection and is now consistently good. The headteacher has created a strong leadership team which is firmly focused on improving the school's provision. As a result, standards are rising, staff are motivated and a strong learning ethos has been created. The school has developed good self-evaluation procedures which ensure the prioritised developments are the right ones to help the school improve. Parents, pupils and governors are consulted regularly and their views carefully considered in this process. Procedures for assessing pupils' work are satisfactory. However, assessment information is not evaluated on a sufficiently regular basis. The school's very effective staff development is recognised in the Investors in People award. Resources, including the recently established computer suite, are used well to enhance learning. The school has rightly recognised that space in many classrooms is restricted and a building programme will take place shortly to extend these areas. Governance is good and

governors provide a critical challenge to the school as well as giving knowledgeable support in areas such as finance, health and safety, and personnel. Their work has made a significant contribution to recent developments and to the school's good ability to improve further.

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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	2	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?	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

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 for being so welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your school. We really enjoyed talking with you and watching you working with your teachers. It was good to speak with your teachers about how well you work at school. We greatly enjoyed your assemblies, hearing about the Year 5 trip to the Isle of Wight and the exciting open afternoon. We were impressed by the school rock band and choir. We think that you and your teachers have worked very hard together to make a very happy and hardworking school that does so many things well. There are a few things we think would help the school to get even better. What we liked most about your school - Your headteacher is doing a good job. He knows just what to do to make the school better for you. - Your teachers and teaching assistants look after you well and help you reach high standards in English, mathematics, music, science, ICT and art. - You have lots of opportunities to say how the school can get better. - Your behaviour is excellent and you get on really well with each other and your teachers. - Your governors work hard to help your school improve. - Those of you who find work difficult are getting the right sort of help and you use it well. What we have asked your school to do now - Help you reach higher standards in writing. - Check how well you are doing more often. - Give you more information about how you can improve when teachers mark your work.