



St Ippolyts Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117440
LEA HERTFORDSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 280079
Inspection dates 20 February 2006 to 21 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Paul Cosway LI

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Ashbrook Lane |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | SG4 7PB |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 12 | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01462432080 |
| Number on roll | 154 | Fax number | 01462438524 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Rev.Ian Tattum |
| Date of previous inspection | 26 June 2000 | Headteacher | Mrs. Maggie Nelson |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector

Description of the school

St Ippolyts is a small primary school in a village on the outskirts of Hitchin. It is a Church of England, voluntary aided school with a strong Christian ethos. The locality served by the school represents a wide mix of social backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Pupils are mostly of White British background. For a small number of pupils English is an additional language, but none is at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements, is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that gives very good value for money. The school has been modest in its own estimation of its effectiveness. It has judged itself to be good, reflecting its desire to continue to find ways in which it can improve. Teaching is good, with some that is excellent. The key to the school's success is the excellent ethos for learning, which enables all pupils to make outstanding progress from the time when they enter the school. This happens because the school as a whole engenders in pupils a real desire to learn, sets them clear targets, monitors their progress towards them very effectively and enables parents to support them by sending home exceptionally useful reports. Standards are well above the national average. The school is aware that pupils could achieve even higher standards in English and is giving pupils more time to develop their written work. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make very good progress. Young children make good progress because of the good provision in the Foundation Stage, reaching above average standards by Year 1. This is an inclusive school, in which pupils of all faiths and backgrounds are valued within the strong Christian ethos. The care and support for pupils and the relationships between the pupils and adults are outstanding, as is pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy school and say that it is very friendly. They have very positive attitudes towards learning and their behaviour is excellent. Parents feel that their children are very well cared for and secure. The school's leadership and management are outstanding. The school has very good procedures in place for tracking pupils' progress. Staff and governors work well together. Issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. Given the strong sense of teamwork and commitment from all staff, the school is well placed to become even more effective.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to provide opportunities for pupils to improve the quality of their writing by giving them more time to develop and redraft it.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children start school with standards that are generally average. They make good progress and attain standards that are above those expected by the time they join Year 1. Pupils' achievement is outstanding overall so that by the end of Year 6 standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are at the early stages of learning English, make excellent progress. In 2005 standards in English and mathematics improved significantly in the national tests at the end of Year 2. Standards were very high compared with those nationally. At the end of Year 6, standards have been consistently high over recent years, well above the national averages in English, mathematics and science. English results have been very slightly lower on average

than the other two subjects and the school is taking action to address this by increasing the amount of time that pupils have to develop and improve their written work. Pupils exceeded the targets set for the end of Year 6 in 2005 and they are on track to meet the targets for 2006. Standards are also high in art and history.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. This is recognised by parents. They report that the school develops the whole child, both academically and personally, very well indeed. Pupils and adults show considerable respect and consideration for others. Pupils behave and concentrate very well indeed and are very positive about the many things they do. Their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is outstanding. They are sensitive to the needs of others and are developing excellent social skills. Teachers take every opportunity to share with them the wonder of learning and they learn to value and appreciate a wide variety of cultures and beliefs. Parents and pupils value and enjoy school. This is one of the reasons why attendance is above average. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life. They participate in regular physical education and swimming lessons and know about healthy eating. They are taught how to keep themselves safe through the comprehensive personal, social and health education programme and pupils report that there is virtually no bullying. They contribute positively to the community through charitable fund raising. Older pupils take on additional responsibilities through the school council and by helping younger ones. Pupils' progress in basic literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills equips them extremely well for their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and in some cases is excellent. The teaching is one of the reasons why pupils make outstanding progress. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils and manage them very well, but it is pupils' outstanding attitudes to work that are key, allowing them to gain the very most out of the teaching. Because of the pervading ethos created by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, pupils' behaviour in lessons is excellent and they work hard, showing great interest and enthusiasm. They say how much they like and respect their teachers, appreciating how much planning they do to make the lessons exciting. Teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and use questioning well to check that pupils understand what they have to do. Good use is made of ICT to present lessons in interesting ways. In an excellent lesson about the Antarctic, the teacher used email messages and video clips from the school's adopted ship, HMS Endurance, to illustrate life in the Polar Regions. The pupils were able to read the crew's responses to their own messages and learned a great deal in an interactive and stimulating lesson. Learning support assistants are

used very effectively and teachers generally match the work well to the needs of pupils with differing levels of ability. However, there is a very small number of pupils whose needs are not always met quite as well where year groups are split between mixed age classes. The school is now looking at ways to group pupils with similar levels of ability and maturity together for key lessons in literacy and numeracy. Homework is set regularly and the teachers mark and assess work accurately.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and provides a rich variety of activities, including opportunities for pupils to learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English are provided for very well indeed. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy. The pupils are well prepared to make use of ICT in their working lives. The school has good resources including a set of 16 lap top computers and interactive whiteboards. Staff are trained and confidently use them. The curriculum is considerably enriched by visits, including a whole school visit to a London theatre and a trip to Sutton Hoo. There is a satisfactory range of clubs to extend pupils' involvement and enjoyment of sports and the arts, including football, netball, orchestra and a chess club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. Within this small, friendly and very caring school, there is an atmosphere of close family. Staff know the pupils and their families well. Risk assessments are completed regularly to ensure that pupils learn in a safe environment. Child protection procedures are fully in place and staff know how to raise any concerns they may have. Strengths include the effective school council and the 'buddy' system, which enable older pupils to show initiative and exercise responsibility. Parents are very pleased with the care and guidance given to their children. The school provides very well for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. There are very good systems for assessing pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Assessment information is used effectively to match the work to meet the needs of almost all pupils. Annual reports to parents are exceptionally detailed, making clear to parents and their children the strengths and the areas for development in their work. Thus, parents are able to support their children's learning at home very well indeed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, ably supported by the newly appointed deputy headteacher, has an excellent knowledge and understanding of the school. They monitor its work very well. As part of the school's very effective self-evaluation procedures, the headteacher consults regularly with

governors, parents and pupils and has identified key areas that need to be addressed to further improve learning and continue to raise standards for all pupils. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher is well supported by everyone associated with the school and all have high expectations for continued improvement. The governing body is supportive of the school and has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, the school's capacity to improve is good. The school building and grounds are of a very high quality. Considerable care is taken to provide pupils with a very attractive and clean learning environment that celebrates them and their achievements. Everyone is valued and all are given opportunities to succeed. Resources, especially the new computer equipment, are good and are used effectively.

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Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|-----|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 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 | NA | 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

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 1 | NA |
| The standards ¹ 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

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| 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 | 2 | 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 | 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 | 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? | 1 | 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? | 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 | 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 |

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|---|-----|
| 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 | Yes |
| 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 Pupils Thank you very much for all the help you gave to me when I visited your school. You were all very polite and friendly. I could see that you all help each other and respect all the adults who work so hard for you in school. These are the things I thought were good. - I think you work very hard and make excellent progress. The standards you reach in literacy, numeracy and science are much higher than in most other schools. - Your behaviour is excellent in lessons. I was also impressed by your behaviour in the assemblies and your beautiful singing! - You enjoy school and I think your teachers give you very interesting work to do. - The care, support and guidance that you get are outstanding. - Your headteacher leads the school very well indeed and all the staff are doing a good job in improving the school and making it an even better place for you. I have suggested something that will help make the school even better. - You could improve your writing even more and I have asked your teachers to give you more time to work on your writing. Thank you again for being so friendly! Make the most of your time at this very special school. Yours sincerely