



Holy Trinity and St John's CofE (VC) Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118694
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280373
Inspection dates 6 February 2006 to 7 February 2006
Reporting inspector Patricia Davies AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St John's Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Margate
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Kent CT9 1LU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01843 223237
Number on roll	445	Fax number	01843 230875
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Mike Tatlow
Date of previous inspection	9 March 1998	Headteacher	Mr Ian Walton

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Holy Trinity and St John's is a large primary school serving an area of social and economic disadvantage. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, but the proportion from minority ethnic families, and also with English as an additional language, has grown recently. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is much larger than average, and some of these pupils have physical needs. A nursery has opened since the school's last inspection, and children joining the nursery classes have a low level of attainment. When children enter the reception classes, attainment is also low because a large proportion has not attended the nursery. When they start in the nursery or reception classes, many children have limited speaking, reading and writing skills for their age, while mathematical development is stronger. An acting headteacher is in post at present, and a substantive headteacher has been appointed to start at the beginning of the summer term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Such has been the good rate of improvement over the last two years that the school's previous designation as having serious weaknesses no longer applies. The school's overall effectiveness is now satisfactory, as is the value for money it provides. In contrast to the inspection findings, the school judges its effectiveness to be good. The school does not have a totally accurate view of itself because it has not as yet fully evaluated the impact of its many new developments.

Much improvement has been made to standards, and they are now broadly average overall in Year 6. However, the school has been more successful in English and science than it has in mathematics, as pupils have too few opportunities to apply their mathematical skills to exploring problems. Provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is good, and these children achieve well. Across the rest of the school, however, the quality of teaching varies and is satisfactory overall. Consequently, progress and achievement are also satisfactory. Pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2 is constrained because they are not expected to record their work as often as they should.

A significant strength lies in the school's good pastoral care which is effective in getting pupils to work hard and to behave well. Staff at all levels take responsibility for leading developments and initiating change, and this factor has been significant in driving the school's rapid improvement. Their success and the progress already made demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement. Closely focused checks on academic performance and analysis of information ensure the school has a clear understanding of what it must do to move forward. However, the school recognises that it now needs to review and consolidate the effectiveness of its many initiatives, and particularly those to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils have plenty of opportunities in lessons to use and develop their mathematical skills further through investigational activities.
- Give pupils in Years 1 and 2 more opportunities to formally record their work.
- Ensure new initiatives are thoroughly consolidated across the school, particularly those to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

There have been rapid improvements in academic performance since the last inspection and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Targets have become more challenging and many pupils are reaching them. Standards at Year 6 are now broadly average, although there is some variation between subjects. Pupils' progress is never less than satisfactory and, sometimes, it is good. However, because progress is inconsistent, achievement overall is satisfactory, rather than good. This mixed picture reflects the variation in

the quality of teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties and English as an additional language achieve as well as others.

Children enter the nursery and reception classes with low attainment. However, teaching here is stimulating and carefully planned, so that these children progress well. By the time pupils enter Year 1 their attainment has risen, but remains below average, as it does when pupils enter Year 3. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are not expected to record their work as often as they should and, as a result, their progress is no better than satisfactory. Expectations are higher in Years 3 to 6 than they are in Years 1 and 2. Nevertheless, progress still varies in Years 3 to 6 and is satisfactory.

The school has been most successful in raising standards where it has focused its attention, for example in English, and especially in writing. Bearing in mind pupils' low starting points, they make good progress in reading and writing. Less attention has been given to mathematics, and recent initiatives to give pupils more experience of mathematical investigations are not yet firmly embedded. As a result, progress in mathematics is satisfactory and standards remain just below average in Year 6. Investigation work is stronger in science, and topics are thoroughly revised in Year 6. Consequently, pupils do well in this subject.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school. Relationships are very positive, especially in classrooms where pupils readily help each other out. Pupils work with interest and perseverance, even when they find tasks difficult. They are polite and considerate and behave well. As a result of the caring ethos, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe, and their spiritual, moral and social development is also good. However, cultural development is satisfactory because pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop awareness of a wide range of cultures and traditions. Attendance is a little below average, despite the school's strenuous efforts to gain good attendance.

The active school council gives pupils numerous opportunities to take responsibility and influence decisions. For example, members took an important role in the selection of the new headteacher. Pupils are prepared well for adult life as a result of such responsibilities and their involvement in fund raising activities. Pupils gain the skills necessary for their future economic well-being, although basic literacy skills are better developed than skills in numeracy. Pupils know the importance of well cooked fresh food and enjoy school meals. They also know that it is important to keep fit and many attend after school sports clubs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning varies across the school, but it is always at least satisfactory, and is satisfactory overall. Some teaching is good. For example, lively and well organised teaching ensures children make a good start in the nursery and reception classes. There are also significant strengths that are common to all lessons. For example, relationships are warm and productive. Pupils are constantly encouraged and praised for what they do well, which raises their confidence and makes them keen to have a go. Teaching assistants are skilled and well briefed and give ready support to individual pupils and groups. The use of computerised whiteboards adds interest and excitement.

In the best lessons, learning is introduced through imaginative and practical activities such as games, and pupils are eager to participate. Explanations are paced at just the right speed, pupils' understanding is checked and tasks are well matched to their needs. However, these features are not found in all lessons. Sometimes the pace is too fast, so that some pupils are left behind and, occasionally, the pace is too slow. In Years 1 and 2, there is too much reliance on the informal use of small individual whiteboards for recording work, and too little expectation that work is recorded formally. These shortcomings are particularly marked in mathematics and prevent pupils from doing better.

Assessment information is mostly used well to sharpen lesson planning. There is also good quality marking which shows pupils how to improve, although this quality is much more evident in English than it is in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Planning systematically builds up pupils' knowledge and understanding as they move up from one year to the next and provides a solid framework for teaching, particularly in English and science. Much improvement has taken place to the provision for information and communication technology (ICT), so that pupils' confidence has grown and they use whiteboard technology competently during lessons.

Subjects are now being linked together more strongly. 'Themed' weeks for mathematics, science and art have been used successfully to generate interest, and introduce more practical and investigatory learning. These initiatives have taken root, in science for example, but have yet to be fully established right across the curriculum, and particularly in mathematics. The school has also yet to fully use opportunities to raise pupils' awareness of cultures that are different to their own.

A wide range of extra curricular activities takes place at lunch times and after school, and adds much to pupils' experience. These clubs are popular with pupils and do much to strengthen their confidence and foster positive attitudes to learning. Personal,

social and health education is an integral part of the school's work. In recognition of these strengths the school holds the Activemark Gold award and has 'Healthy Schools' status.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

All pupils are cared for well. Close attention is given to first aid and security, and pupils say they feel safe at school. The school is particularly vigilant of those in need of extra encouragement and support. The work of school counsellors has done much to improve behaviour at lunch times. The progress and personal needs of pupils with learning difficulties are carefully monitored, as is also the case for the increasing numbers of new arrivals who speak little or no English.

Numerous links with supporting agencies offer considerable help and guidance to parents and pupils, and foster close links with families. There is intensive support for pupils with speech and language difficulties, and those pupils with physical difficulties benefit from regular physiotherapy. Parents appreciate the high level of pastoral care provided for their children. Arrangements for child protection are effective.

Guidance to pupils about how to make progress is much improved, although the quality of feedback on work is not consistently good. Pupils have clear learning targets which are linked to National Curriculum levels and regularly updated. They know their targets and are involved in assessing how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The rapid and successful improvement to the school's effectiveness and academic performance over the last two years clearly illustrates the school's good leadership, particularly at senior level. All staff now share responsibility for raising standards and improving pupils' progress. Professional development has been used well to increase the confidence, commitment and expertise of staff. There has also been a careful placing of staff to influential positions so that they can support the development of important school initiatives and other colleagues. As one senior staff member commented, there are 'key people in place who can lead'. Such has been the good improvement to leadership that there are firm management structures and systems in place to effectively direct and secure future improvement.

Improvements to assessment, the analysis of information and consultation with parents, pupils and governors have given the school detailed information on which to act. Most significantly, senior members of staff have given the necessary support to subject leaders to monitor performance in order to bring about valuable improvements.

Governors have a good understanding of the school and hold it to account. However, the school is aware that, in the face of so many initiatives, it must now take stock of its success so far and consolidate improvement in order to tackle inconsistencies that remain in the quality of its work.

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	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	3	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	3	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

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You were friendly and polite and we really enjoyed being with you. Your school had a number of important things to put right the last time it was inspected, and the staff have done many things since then to make the school better and help you to do the best you can. This letter is to tell you what we found out about your school.

What your school does well

- Adults take good care of you and build your confidence, and you told us you feel safe and happy at school.
- You all work hard in lessons, even when you find things difficult.
- You behave well.
- There are lots of exciting clubs, and extra activities like 'themed' weeks, which you really enjoy.
- You are doing well in reading and writing.
- Those of you in the nursery and reception classes get a good start to your life at school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Give you lots more mathematical problems and investigations to do to help you improve even more.
- Make sure that those of you in Years 1 and 2 record more of your work, in your work books, for example.
- Look carefully at all the new things the school is doing and make sure that these improvements are happening successfully right across the school.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Davies Lead Inspector