



Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School, Dartford

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 118859
LEA Kent
Inspection number 280412
Inspection dates 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006
Reporting inspector Carole Skinner AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Chatsworth Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Dartford
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Kent DA1 5AF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01322 224474
Number on roll	254	Fax number	01322 290667
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Haynes

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in a part of Dartford that has significant levels of social deprivation. It draws its pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. The majority of pupils are White British while approximately a quarter come from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are very few pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is similar to that seen in most schools. There has been a high turnover of teachers in recent years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the standards achieved by the pupils and the quality of the leadership and management.

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate because the standards achieved by pupils are too low, particularly in English and mathematics, and have declined since the last inspection. The leadership and management are not sufficiently focused on finding the root causes of this underachievement and taking decisive and prompt action to tackle it. The school's systems for evaluating its own effectiveness are inadequate and not rigorous enough to give an accurate and objective view of how well it is doing. Subject leaders do not have enough influence on raising standards in their subjects and pupils' learning is not checked thoroughly. The school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

The school's strengths lie in promoting pupils' all-round personal development within a caring, nurturing environment and in providing a varied and interesting curriculum which is enriched by a number of additional activities.

The quality of teaching, although satisfactory, is not high enough to accelerate pupils' learning in order to ensure consistently good progress. This is particularly the case for the average and higher attaining pupils who are not always given sufficiently challenging work. They make steady rather than good progress because the targets that are set for them are comfortable rather than aspirational.

The provision for children in the Reception class has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Most children are on course to reach the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1.

There is adequate expertise and commitment to raising standards amongst staff and governors to ensure that the school has the capacity to remedy its shortcomings. What is lacking is a systematic strategy, underpinned by a sense of urgency, to create the momentum for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science, especially for the average and higher attaining pupils.
- Ensure that all pupils have sufficiently challenging targets and that teaching promotes good progress for all pupils.
- Introduce more rigorous systems for evaluating the school's effectiveness and use the information gathered systematically to determine the action to be taken to improve pupils' achievement.

- Improve leadership at all levels and make greater use of the expertise of subject leaders to monitor standards and the quality of provision.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Although there are encouraging signs of improvement, standards are too low and pupils do not achieve as well as they should, especially by the end of Year 2 where the results of national assessments have been significantly below average for the past five years. They were exceptionally low in 2005. There is also underachievement in Years 3 to 6, particularly amongst average to higher attaining pupils, although standards in Year 6 are closer to national averages than in Year 2. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, as do those pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language, because they receive good additional support. Children in Reception make satisfactory progress from broadly average starting points to reach expected standards by the time they start in Year 1.

Pupils do not make enough progress because the targets that are set for them are not sufficiently challenging. Shortcomings in the way assessment information is used to inform this process mean that many average and higher attaining pupils are progressing at too leisurely a pace through the levels of the National Curriculum and not achieving their full potential.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because the school places a high value on nurturing positive attitudes, good relationships and moral and social awareness. Pupils show great enthusiasm for school and find the curriculum interesting and enjoyable. As a result, attendance is good. Pupils show respect and consideration for each other and for adults and there is a good degree of racial harmony. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on important concepts such as forgiveness, and strong links with the church further enhance their spiritual development. Cultural diversity is recognised and celebrated.

Pupils behave responsibly and are aware of their own and others' safety. They have a good understanding of what contributes to a healthy lifestyle. A well planned programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education helps to equip pupils with the skills necessary for future life, though for many, slow progress in acquiring higher level literacy and numeracy skills is a drawback. Pupils have few opportunities to take on responsibilities, although representatives on the school council are proud of their role.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, it is still not high enough to enable pupils to make consistently good progress in their learning. This is slowing down the pace at which the school is able to overcome the legacy of underachievement. Teachers form good relationships with pupils and have high expectations of their behaviour. Pupils are keen to learn and respond well to the teachers' enthusiasm.

The teaching of English and mathematics in groups based on pupils' prior attainment is beginning to have a positive effect on raising standards, but expectations of average to higher attaining pupils' progress remain too low. Work is often not tailored well enough to meet the needs of these pupils so they make steady rather than rapid progress. Teachers' marking is variable in quality. The best examples praise pupils for good work while showing them how to make it even better, but this is not done consistently. Teachers are not involved closely enough in setting and reviewing pupils' yearly targets to ensure that they make optimum progress from term to term.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is another of the school's good features. It has been revised and improved to cater for the needs of pupils in mixed age classes and ensures progression in learning from year to year. It is not the curriculum which is limiting pupils' progress but the pace at which they are expected to move through its different levels. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned to incorporate all areas of learning within overall themes. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is now satisfactory, and it is used effectively as a tool for learning. Subjects such as geography, history and religious education have a high profile and there is a strong emphasis on the creative arts. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is good. The curriculum is further enriched by a wide variety of activities, including learning a foreign language, clubs, visits, visitors and special themed days. The school acknowledges the need to continue to improve opportunities for writing across the curriculum and there is evidence to show that this is improving.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. Pastoral care is good. Adults know pupils well and ensure that they are well cared for. There are good systems for promoting pupils' health and safety and for safeguarding them within a secure and supportive environment. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties enables them to make sound progress in their learning. The Community Links Officer plays an important role in offering pupils a 'listening ear' and liaising with their families.

The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is less effective. The procedures for setting individual targets for pupils are not rigorous enough. They rely mainly on the outcomes of formal tests and do not take sufficient account of teachers' ongoing assessments. Signs of underachievement are not picked up on quickly enough to enable teachers to tackle identified shortcomings.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Although the leadership and management successfully promote good personal development and well-being, they are inadequate because they are not sufficiently focused on raising standards and eliminating underachievement. The school is managed well on a day-to-day basis and there is a very positive and supportive ethos which helps pupils to enjoy school. Prudent financial management ensures the school is well resourced and equipped despite the constraints of a budget that has been adversely affected by a falling roll.

Governors support the headteacher and staff well and ensure that statutory requirements are met, but they have not been sufficiently rigorous in finding out why the school's performance in national tests is not better. Subject leaders have good expertise, but this is not used to the full to support the school's attempts to raise standards. The school lacks a systematic approach to evaluating its own effectiveness. Staff, governors, pupils and parents are not sufficiently involved in the process. The school collects a great deal of information about pupils' attainments but does not make the best use of this to enable teachers to use it constructively. The monitoring of performance data is not sufficiently thorough to ensure that key weaknesses are identified. There has been a high turnover of staff in recent years, but the quality of teaching is not checked well enough to measure the impact of staff changes or to ensure that teaching consistently promotes good learning among the pupils.

The leadership and management have demonstrated the capacity to bring about improvement, for example, in the provision for ICT and the Foundation Stage. They are aware of the need to raise standards and have already taken steps to improve the teaching of English, mathematics and science. The main hurdle to be overcome is the tendency to seek to explain the low standards in national tests rather than taking decisive action to improve them.

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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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	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?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	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	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	3	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?	3	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?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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 Children

We enjoyed meeting you when we visited your school. Thank you for being friendly and welcoming.

Here are some of the things we think are good about your school:

You enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about learning new things.

You behave well, work hard and take good care of each other.

All of the adults who work in the school look after you well and make sure that you feel happy and safe.

You learn lots of interesting things and have the chance to meet people and go on trips which make learning even more fun.

We have asked your school to make some improvements:

We think that many of you could be doing even better than you are and have asked the school to help you make faster progress.

In order to do this, you need to have targets that stretch and challenge you.

We have asked the staff and governors to improve the way they check up on how well the school is doing so they can take action quickly to make things better.

We have asked the headteacher and the teachers who are in charge of different subjects to make regular checks on how well you are all learning and making progress.

We hope you continue to enjoy your time at Holy Trinity and wish you success in the future.

With best wishes

Carole Skinner Lead Inspector