



# Southam St James (Voluntary Aided) CofE Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 125727  
**LEA** Warwickshire  
**Inspection number** 281985  
**Inspection dates** 28 November 2005 to 29 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Alwyne Jolly RISP

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Tollgate Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Southam
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Warwickshire CV47 1EE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01926 812127
<b>Number on roll</b>	214	<b>Fax number</b>	01926 815438
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Amanda Rowlatt
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 September 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Mary Thompson

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 28 November 2005 - 29 November 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 281985
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Southam St James (Voluntary Aided) Church of England Primary School is an average sized school situated in Southam, a small market town. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is low and there are no pupils from homes in which English is not the first language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, mainly moderate learning difficulties, is below average and there are two pupils with statements of special need. Attainment on entry is in line with expectations.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

The school evaluates its effectiveness as good which is confirmed by this inspection. Pupils make good progress to attain above average standards as a result of good teaching and an effective emphasis on each pupil's individual needs. The only group who do not do as well are more able boys, in their writing.

There is satisfactory provision in the Foundation Stage and pupils are on course to reach the standard expected for their age by the start of Year 1. However, sometimes children are given too little adult guidance when engaged in independent activities.

This is justifiably a very popular school. Parents are very appreciative of the education their children receive and pupils clearly enjoy their learning.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher is a very effective leader who has led the school through a sustained period of good academic achievement combined with an effective focus on the pupils' personal development and well-being. She is well supported by an astute governing body. The school has a very accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and is well placed for further significant progress. It provides good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- plan and teach a programme of writing tasks which will more fully engage the interest and needs of boys, particularly the more able
- ensure children in the Foundation Stage receive sufficient guidance to help them benefit more fully from independent activities.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are good by Year 6 indicating that all pupils achieve well. The school sets challenging targets for its oldest pupils and they are generally achieved. Children in the Reception class make satisfactory progress so that they are on course to attain the standards expected for their age by the time they join Year 1.

Progress accelerates from Year 1 onwards as pupils benefit from consistently good teaching and high expectations. As a result, a high proportion of pupils attained the expected Level 2 in the national tests for reading and mathematics between 2003 and 2005. Progress is sustained so that standards have been above average in the Year 6 national tests in English, mathematics and science for the last three years.

The quality of writing of able boys is the least satisfactory aspect of attainment and has been for some time. The school has identified untidy handwriting and careless spelling, together with unimaginative content, as the main weaknesses. Teachers have been less successful in engaging boys' interest in writing compared with other subjects. Boys and girls achieve equally in relation to their prior attainment in all other areas. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities benefit from their individual education plans, which have helpful targets to ensure they make good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Particular strengths lie in social and moral education. Cultural development is well promoted in, for example, history lessons and visits to places of educational interest. Pupils gain a satisfactory understanding of other cultures in religious education, assemblies and visitors to the school.

The school's positive commitment to pupils' personal development is much appreciated by parents, one of whom commented, 'This is a lovely school with a Christian ethos which allows children to thrive'. Pupils enjoy school and behave well. They have very good attitudes and are keen to contribute their ideas. Attendance is outstanding. These factors have a positive impact on their learning. Pupils are polite, confident and self-assured. They play and work safely, and behaviour in the playground is good. The school is successful in encouraging pupils to eat and drink healthily and be physically active. School lunches provide healthy alternatives and unhealthy lunch boxes and snacks are actively discouraged.

Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community, having participated in a series of collections for local charities. Their good achievements in literacy and numeracy prepare them well for the future. They fulfil numerous responsibilities in school well, and Year 5 pupils effectively develop economic skills by running a stationery shop.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the Reception class, the teacher knows and understands the children well. They are nurtured well to become confident and to feel secure in their environment. However, in the sessions where children are encouraged to work without direct adult supervision, more initial guidance would help them to learn more from their independent activities.

Teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of all pupils except for able boys' writing. Lessons proceed with a clear purpose and challenge pupils at different levels. Teaching and learning are enhanced by the very good relationships between pupils and teachers. The quality of assessment is satisfactory. There are good procedures to measure pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science, and a structure is developing to extend this to other subjects. In literacy, particularly writing, pupils receive targets for improvement in their groups. The tracking of pupils' performance in order to set future targets is at an early stage of development. Homework arrangements are satisfactory. The pupils appreciate the quality of teachers' marking, which is good in all classes. In Year 5, it is exemplary as regular, detailed and constructive comments outline where pupils have achieved targets and how they can improve further.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum which meets all statutory requirements. It makes good provision for pupils' learning in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. There are appropriate policies and practice for sex education and drug avoidance.

Pupils' education is enriched by a good range of visits, both local and residential, in addition to extra-curricular activities. These enhance pupils' learning experiences and provide extra interest to the curriculum. For instance, the visit of a local wood carver gave pupils first-hand experience of working with a less familiar material while sharing his own first-hand knowledge of the craft.

Year 6 pupils confirm that they feel that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. They are looking forward to transferring to the college in the town, although they will miss the school.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good care, guidance and support. This provision helps to ensure that pupils are kept safe, develop well as individuals and achieve well. There are secure and well understood procedures for ensuring child protection. The school ensures that potential hazards are recognised and avoided; for example, a visual check is completed by staff before pupils use the adjoining playing field.

There was a good example of the attention given to pupils' guidance in an excellent assembly on the week's theme of 'triumph' for the youngest pupils. The Reception and Key Stage 1 leader sensitively pointed out how famous people have overcome the handicap of asthma, while emphasising the value and danger of inhalers, which many of the pupils claimed to possess.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported well to ensure they make good progress. Pupils receive regular guidance in lessons and through visitors on how to keep healthy and stay safe.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The Headteacher has been very successful in maintaining above average standards of attainment whilst promoting the personal development and well-being of pupils. She has a very accurate and informed awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses through a rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. She is very much in touch with what is going on in the school, through her personal support to pupils who have special educational needs and her regular presence in classrooms.

Management is good and as a result, the school is a calm, orderly community where pupils feel safe and prosper. In response to criticisms in the last report, subject managers review a selection of pupils' work in all classes and observe teaching to establish what action needs to be taken in order to raise standards. The governors have responded well to criticisms in the last report. They have introduced effective systems for monitoring standards and provision. For example, governors complete a specific form to identify the purpose of any visit and they report back to the full governing body on their findings. The school development plan is now a more effective document, with clear details and priorities. Other criticisms from the previous inspection report regarding progress in art and design, geography, and design and technology have also been addressed satisfactorily. Pupils' views are expressed through the School Council and parents report that there is regular contact with them. The school has created an ethos where pupils live harmoniously together. One Year 6 boy observed, 'We may fall out but we don't fight'.

A governor commented, 'This is not a school where people sit on their laurels', reflecting the commitment to sustain the present good performance. The good quality of the self-evaluation indicates a clear capacity to maintain and improve upon this 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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	3	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	1	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	2	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

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

Southam St James (VA) C of E Primary School Tollgate Road Southam CV47 1EE

30 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for being so helpful when I visited your school. I enjoyed the time I spent with you and I can understand why you are so happy at school.

These are the things I am most pleased about

- your attendance is outstanding and helps your learning
- you achieve good standards
- your behaviour is good and you get on well together
- the school is well led and managed.

We have asked the teachers and governors to continue their good work to make the school even better and have suggested that:

- the teachers plan a programme of tasks to help boys write better
- children in the Reception class are given more advice when they attempt activities in the classroom on their own.

I hope you enjoy the Christmas celebrations.

Yours sincerely

Mr A C Jolly (Lead inspector)