



Holy Trinity Church of England VC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115075
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290122
Inspection dates 11–12 December 2006
Reporting inspector John Paull

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Fiddlers Folley
School category	Voluntary controlled		Colchester
Age range of pupils	4–11		CO3 9UE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01206 240880
Number on roll (school)	133	Fax number	01206 240507
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr A Scott
		Headteacher	Mrs H Craig and Ms S Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Holy Trinity is smaller than most primary schools, although its roll has recently increased sharply. Most of its pupils live on a nearby housing estate. Others are from rural backgrounds further afield. Nearly all pupils are from White British families. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. The school is part of the local School Sports Partnership, which is centred at a secondary school and last year it achieved the Active Schools Mark. It also holds an Investors in People award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Holy Trinity is a good school. It is improving well under the leadership of job-sharing headteachers. These good leaders, in a short time, have very effectively brought their strengths to the leadership role. They have created a powerful vision for the school's future and the conditions to realise it. This is set out convincingly in a clear improvement plan. Successful action based on this plan is well under way, so the capacity to improve is good. Governors are fully involved in setting the school's agenda and understand its strengths and few weaknesses. Good value for money is achieved.

In the light of this good picture, growth in the school's numbers has occurred and this affects most year groups. The school's response has been good. For example, many parents are delighted with the introduction of an extra class which has reduced class sizes, although the number of Year 6 pupils with learning difficulties has risen to above average. Pupils' achievement is good. From starting points that are currently a little lower than normally found, good teaching is ensuring that nearly all pupils in the Reception class achieve well and are on course to reach expected goals. Good provision, including teaching, continues through Years 1 and 2. This results in good progress. Standards at this stage have consistently been at least average and often above. This is reflected in Year 2 assessments which were above average in 2006. While their good achievement holds pupils in good stead for their future well-being, the increase in pupils with learning difficulties has understandably resulted in lower overall standards and is particularly reflected in test results in Year 6. In 2006 these were broadly average, while in the past they were often above average. Standards in mathematics are not as high as in English or science. One important reason is that some pupils who exceeded the expected level for their age at the end of Year 2 did not do so in Year 6. School leaders have identified that mathematics holds a lower appeal for pupils than other subjects. Information gleaned from monitoring progress has indicated that poor understanding of the language of problem-solving is a factor. Teaching and what is taught are currently being adapted to rectify this difficulty and standards are rising.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding, with excellence evident in the spiritual, moral and social elements. This produces a powerful spirit of collaborative relationships, in which pupils and staff alike show high regard for each other's well-being and respect for the world. Behaviour is often very good, with many pupils very willing to explain their liking of school. Good arrangements for the care, guidance and support of pupils and a good, often innovatory, curriculum contribute well to this picture. Personal care and guidance are particularly strong. However, while a good system for academic monitoring has been introduced, not all teachers are yet sufficiently adept in analysing the information gained. Decisions about what action to take are therefore over-dependent on the headteachers and are not as immediate as might otherwise be. The reason is related to the newness of the system, which has not reached full effectiveness.

What the school should do to improve further

- Focus on mathematical language, so pupils are better equipped to solve problems and, for those who have the capacity, to reach levels higher than those normally expected for their age.
- Enable all staff to understand recent developments in the monitoring of pupils' progress, so they can analyse the resulting information more effectively and act more quickly on its outcomes.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall achievement is good. Pupils make good progress through the school, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. They make a good start in Reception. Good achievement continues in Years 1 and 2, and standards are currently a little above average. Standards are broadly average by Year 6. This is not as high as it was a few years ago but represents good progress as there are now more pupils with learning difficulties in this age group. Although satisfactory, achievement in mathematics is not as good as that in English and science. The main reason is that pupils have difficulty in solving word problems and small number of higher attaining pupils did not do as well in tests in mathematics as they did in the other subjects. Leaders have responded well, putting on a series of meetings to inform and involve parents in an effort to raise the subject's profile. At the same time, lessons are emphasising specific subject vocabulary and strategies for solving problems. Consequently achievement in mathematics is improving.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Pupils approach moments of reflection very openly. Their highly insightful responses attest to the many opportunities that are provided to consider their own responsibilities in the world around them. Their moral and social development is also very strong, with particularly good collaborative relationships, and a high commitment to supporting organisations in the community. Notably, pupils are currently involved in raising funds for a local baby care unit. They are led very well by their own elected house captains, who liaise highly competently with the staff. The school choir sings at a local home for the elderly and is very excited that they will perform at the Royal Albert Hall. Pupils understand that physical activity helps to keep them fit and healthy. They say that bullying is rare and believe that incidents are dealt with seriously, which helps them to feel safe. Their cultural appreciation is very good, particularly musically and artistically. Nearly all of them say that school is a very enjoyable place, which is reflected in above average attendance and good punctuality.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers evaluate and mark their pupils' work effectively and use the information to plan subsequent lessons, setting targets that match pupils' different needs. These targets show pupils how to make good progress for themselves. Teaching is often pacy and lively. Pupils reward this strong teaching by paying attention carefully. The school knows that, until recently, teachers' questioning had not been quite as strong in mental mathematics as in other subjects, which had been one of the factors in limiting progress. This is improving. Learning support assistants are effective. They provide pupils with good support, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities. These pupils also progress well towards targets of their own. Pupils work hard and nearly always try their best.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It also features several innovatory ideas that enrich learning and provide opportunities for pupils to wonder and be amazed. For example, whole days are regularly set aside when pupils work together in mixed age groups on a particular theme. These 'curriculum days' help pupils to appreciate that knowledge and skills acquired in one subject often enhance understanding of another. All statutory subjects are taught, including what is required for children in their Reception year. However, adaptations of planning in mathematics have not yet reached full effectiveness in lifting standards to the level of other subjects. Pupils benefit well from a good range of after-school clubs, many of which provide physical activity. In keeping with the partnership in a school sports association, a high proportion of pupils attend these clubs. This enhances good provision in physical education, including swimming.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Personal care and support are outstanding, with many open avenues for pupils to express their views, as well as prominently displayed 'golden rules' about the sort of behaviour and attitudes that are expected. Assemblies are used very well as a forum for guiding pupils towards thinking about how school and the wider community can be even more harmonious. Awards provide a good way of monitoring progress in these areas. Statutory elements of child protection, health and safety follow the relevant guidelines. Powerful new systems to monitor pupils' progress are beginning to produce useful information. While these are not yet fully effective, they are showing where effort should be focused to improve standards and are being used well by staff to guide learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteachers and governors evaluate performance accurately and use the information to set future development. In the short time that the headteachers have been in post, they have consolidated and improved upon previous developments, for example, resources in information and communication technology. The staff are a strong team and are committed to raising standards. Emphasis is placed on good communication, so everyone knows where the drive for improvement is placed. The partnership with parents and the wider community has developed very effectively, including, for instance, enlisting parents' support in raising their children's appetite for mathematics. A typical parent's comment points out, 'This is a lovely school - I wish I had gone to one like it'. Governors are making a good contribution. They know the school well and have convincing strategic plans for future leadership and recruitment.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 December 2006

Dear Children

Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School, Fiddlers Folley, Fordham Heath, CO3 9UE

Thank you for being so welcoming when I visited your school. You helped such a lot to make the two days go well. I enjoyed eating lunch with you, speaking to you and seeing your work. It is great that so many of you told me that you like school and that your headteachers and teachers teach well and care for you a lot while you are there. I agree with you about these things. I also liked talking to your house captains and I agree with them that your school is good.

Here are some more things that I like about your school:

- You make good progress and achieve well.
- You behave very well and are exceptionally good at exploring feelings about the world and how to protect it and make it better for people to live in.
- The activities that teachers plan for you, including in the Reception class, are interesting and prepare you well for the future.

Here are the main things that I would like your headteachers, teachers and school governors to do next:

- Make sure that you all achieve as well in mathematics as you do in other subjects. You can help with this by seeing maths as just as exciting as all the other subjects.
- Ensure that all your teachers are as good at using information about how you are getting on as your headteachers already are.

I hope that you will continue to get on very well in the future and that you will always be proud of your school.

John William Paull

Lead Inspector