



Trinity St Mary's CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115200
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290163
Inspection dates 21–22 November 2006
Reporting inspector John Messer

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Trinity Square
School category	Voluntary aided		South Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford
Age range of pupils	4–11		Essex CM3 5JX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01245 321711
Number on roll (school)	201	Fax number	01245 325440
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs A Tuff
		Headteacher	Mr K W Bannister
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. Most pupils come from relatively advantaged families. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is very low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few are from minority ethnic families. Attainment on entry to the school is slightly above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features. Standards are high. The rich curriculum is relevant to pupils' needs and is supplemented by some outstanding extra activities. Pupils enjoy school and are bubbling with enthusiasm for learning. Behaviour is excellent. Personal development is outstanding. Pupils are self-assured and discuss important issues, such as global warming, thoughtfully. Particularly good foundations are laid for their future learning and working lives. Care, guidance and support are excellent. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school. They have a very good understanding of how to eat sensibly, stay healthy and keep fit.

Teaching and learning are good. Children settle happily in the Reception class and achieve well. Standards are above average by the end of the Reception year. In Years 1 to 6 pupils achieve well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' performance and this is a key factor in enabling pupils to attain high standards. Pupils have targets to aim at so that they can improve their performance. However, they do not have an overview that paints a clear enough picture of all the steps they need to take to meet the school's high aspirations. This is the main reason why, although progress is good in Years 3 to 6, it does not always meet the school's ambitious expectations. The national assessments at the end of Year 2 showed that pupils attained standards that were exceptionally high in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. The results of national tests for pupils in Year 6 showed that results were exceptionally high in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average. Pupils do well in sport and music.

The leadership, management and governance of the school are good. The headteacher is constantly striving to improve the quality of education. Over the years he has built a highly successful school. A vibrant climate for learning has been established. Subject leaders share a strong commitment to raising standards. They create detailed action plans for improvement but these are not explicit about how much progress is expected as a result of action taken, for example, in literacy and numeracy. As there is no clear yardstick it is not possible to measure precisely how successful initiatives are in accelerating progress. The overwhelming majority of parents are delighted with the education provided for their children. Governors work closely with staff and monitor the school's performance thoroughly. The school is analytical and its self-evaluation is mostly accurate although at times a little modest. It has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that pupils in Years 3 to 6 have a clearer and more precise understanding of exactly what they need to do to reach the next stages in their learning.
- Include in subject leaders' action plans clear, measurable targets so that the school can judge the success of actions taken in terms of pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, achieve well. Children's achievement in the Reception class is good and they are on course to attain or exceed the early learning goals by the end of the school year. Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is good in Years 1 and 2 and they attain high standards. Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6. The school's accurate analysis of its performance in writing showed that progress, although above average, was not as good as in the other subjects. Initiatives to improve writing are being implemented. This is typical of the leadership's swift identification of areas for improvement and its rapid response to improve matters. By the time they leave the school, pupils attain high standards. They are good at sport, including swimming. They sing beautifully and many play musical instruments to a good level. They develop a good range of skills in ICT and use computers confidently. In a challenging lesson on the use of spreadsheets for pupils in Year 6 one reported, 'I have to teach my mum about this because she doesn't know how to do it'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils work together extremely well and enjoy their lessons and other activities greatly. Pupils' behaviour is excellent in lessons and about the school. Attendance is consistently above average. Pupils develop exceptional awareness of how to lead healthy lifestyles through a balanced diet and regular exercise. Pupils in Year 5 demonstrate high levels of responsibility by acting as play leaders at break. They supervise equipment and give help to younger pupils when needed. The school council and class councils have budgets and use these wisely for purchasing equipment, particularly for use at playtime.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and well supported by the strong Christian ethos within the school. These areas have improved since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils successfully learn about other faiths and cultures different from their own. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and provide financial support and presents for less fortunate children in India and Bulgaria. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of education and later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Teachers are good at motivating pupils and in many lessons pupils are bursting to contribute to discussions. Teachers plan lessons carefully to meet the wide

range of pupils' needs. Good strategies are used to develop pupils' own ideas and good use is made of interactive whiteboards to bring learning alive. Highly skilled teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities receive good support and make good progress. Many skilled specialists from outside the school supplement the teaching force and support learning well, especially in music and sport. The headteacher has rightly identified that more creativity in teaching is needed if it is to become outstanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a rich and relevant curriculum. There is a strong emphasis on English and mathematics with very good provision for the creative arts and sport. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 enjoy French lessons. The curriculum is supported by an exceptional range of clubs and other activities. A good range of visits and visitors include residential visits and instructors in sport and the arts. Resources are good and the design of the school is unique. It is built around a church and shares the site with a catholic school. Pupils from both schools play together and share the church. This helps to promote good relationships between the two schools. There are also very strong links with the nearby sports college and other local schools which improve provision in a range of subjects such as physical education and the creative arts. The school is exploring ways to link subjects together more creatively in order to make learning even more stimulating.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This aspect of the school's work is excellent. Within it, care and support for pupils are outstanding, guidance is good. The school's efforts encourage exceptional behaviour and good academic achievement. Pupils say they enjoy school greatly and feel safe. They know they will receive help if they are worried. They feel particularly comfortable in sharing minor concerns with the office staff who are all very friendly and approachable. Pupils say that there are very rare incidents of bullying but agree that such incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively by teachers. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare are very effective and much appreciated by pupils and parents. Pupils receive clear guidance about how to stay safe and look after themselves. Pupils have clear targets to help them to improve. They are not particularly inspired by their targets and some report that they are too general and not always challenging enough. They do not feel a sense of ownership because the targets are provided for them rather than them being involved in setting their targets. Each half term they are given some targets but they are not sure about how much progress they are expected to make by the end of the year.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, his deputy and assistant headteacher create good strategic plans for further improvements. Subject leaders are keen to improve standards but some are new and the impact of their initiatives is yet to be realised. They produce detailed action plans including information relating to the activities which will be used to assess improvement. However, it is not possible for the school to accurately monitor and evaluate the value added by new initiatives or actions taken because success criteria are not identified. This is particularly the case with the core subjects. Nevertheless, the school measures pupils' actual attainment and progress carefully. It uses this data well to identify exactly where improvements are needed. The school has been developing well under the very good leadership of the headteacher. Standards have been maintained at high levels. The buildings have been extended through the creative use of space, such as building a computer suite in the roof above classrooms. Staff development is exceptionally good and support staff take a lead in many extra teaching programmes as well as in the teaching of ICT. The school gives good value for money and has good capacity to improve further.

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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?	1
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	1
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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

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?	1

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

23 November 2006

Dear Children

Trinity St Mary's C of E Primary School, Trinity Square, South Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 5JX

What a great school! We thoroughly enjoyed our short visit. Everybody was so friendly and welcoming. Thank you for helping us to write this report by telling us all about the school.

There are so many good things about the school that it is difficult to know where to start. You told us that the best thing about the school was the teachers and the support staff. We agree. You said that they put you at your ease and that they listen carefully to your thoughts and opinions. That's good because you do have lots of thoughts and opinions. You work hard and you attain high standards in your work. You told us that you do 'loads of sport'. We found out that you do much more than most other schools and the range is amazing. The links with 'Willy de', the sports college, are wonderful. Not many children in other schools get such good coaching in squash and hockey. We heard some beautiful singing and saw you performing some great dance routines with the Essex Dance Theatre who visit you each week. You are very good at ICT and we saw Year 6 doing really complicated work on spreadsheets.

You told us about the 'bullying week' where you thought hard about how horrible bullying is and wrote poems to describe your feelings about bullying. You said that yours is a friendly school where bullying is not tolerated at all. We were impressed with the sharing you do with your friends in St Joseph's. It's great that you share the playground, play with them happily and sometimes join with them in worship. You know how to look after yourselves and stay safe.

We think that are a few things that should be done to make the school even better. The teachers want you to make even better progress in Years 3 to 6. We have agreed that if you had a much clearer picture of exactly how much progress you are expected to make each year, then you yourselves could think about what you need to do to reach the next stages in your learning, especially in literacy and numeracy. Also we think that the teachers could describe more clearly exactly how much progress they expect you to make each year. It would then be easier to check on how successful you have been.

We know that the school is going to get even better. There are exciting times ahead.

With all best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Messer (Lead inspector)