



Trinity Church of England Lower School, Aldwinckle

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 121956
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292275
Inspection date 21 February 2007
Reporting inspector Helen Barter

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

Type of school	First	School address	Main Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		Aldwinckle
Age range of pupils	4-9		Kettering NN14 3EL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01832 720239
Number on roll (school)	109	Fax number	01832 720239
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Vacant Position
		Headteacher	Caroline Tighe
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small five-class lower school draws its pupils from Aldwincle and other nearby villages. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage and all are fluent in English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is lower than average, as is the proportion of those entitled to claim free school meals. Children's attainment on entry to Reception is generally above average. The headteacher joined the school in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Trinity is a good school where pupils achieve well and attain high standards. It does not focus solely on developing pupils' academic abilities. There is a tremendous sense of teamwork to succeed in fulfilling the aim to 'motivate all members of the school family to take an active role in the development of themselves, their school and the community'. The high quality of care, guidance and support and the good curriculum result in pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their schooling and beyond. Parents wholeheartedly endorse this. One parent's comment that 'Trinity offers the safe, nurturing and inspiring qualities that every child needs and has a right to' typifies the views of many others. As a consequence, pupils love school, have very positive attitudes to learning and behave exceptionally well. One pupil's description of their school as 'joyful' was greeted with cries of 'yes!' by others.

Very good induction procedures in Reception help children to get a good start to school. The good Foundation Stage provision encourages children to learn independently. They quickly develop confidence and enthusiasm for learning. As a result, almost all children reach the goals expected of them and a large number exceed them. Pupils continue to make good progress and achieve well through the consistently good quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 to 4. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve exceptionally well because they are very well supported by teachers and skilled teaching assistants to reach the highest standards of which they are capable.

By the end of Year 2, standards are exceptionally high in reading and writing, and well above average in mathematics; these high standards are maintained in Years 3 and 4. All groups of pupils of all ages achieve well in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Within the school, the most capable pupils of all do not do quite as well in mathematics as they do in reading and writing, and girls tend to do better than boys. The school is aware of this and has introduced a new tracking system to chart individual pupils' progress more closely and to respond even more swiftly to pupils' needs. Pupils are developing very good skills in assessing their own writing and identifying what they need to do next through the 'Steps to Success'. There is now scope to use this approach to improve pupils' achievement further in other subjects.

The school's success owes much to the good leadership and management and strong team-working approach of all staff. The new headteacher recognises the school's strengths and is determined to build on them. All staff and parents support her in this aim. The governing body offers excellent support, challenge and practical expertise to the school in its drive towards further improvement. School self-evaluation processes are well established and involve all members of the school community. The school has gone from strength to strength since its last inspection. Information and communication technology (ICT) standards have risen through the acquisition of good quality resources. The school is well placed to build on its already considerable successes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Embed the new system for tracking pupils' progress, particularly to help as many pupils reach the higher levels in mathematics as they do in reading and writing.
- Develop the use of 'Steps to Success' in subjects other than English to help pupils understand even better the next steps to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with skills and abilities which are above average for their age, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. Nearly all meet the goals they are expected to reach by the end of Reception and a significant number exceed them. Carefully planned support helps the very small number needing extra help to improve their writing and number skills. This good rate of progress continues so that, by the end of Year 2, pupils reach standards which are exceptionally high. They are higher in reading and writing than in mathematics because relatively fewer pupils reach the highest level in this subject. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 continue to achieve well and maintain high standards. Pupils also achieve well and reach above-average standards in ICT following the substantial improvement made in resources since the last inspection. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make excellent progress towards their individual targets in reading, writing and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils feel very happy and safe in the strong school ethos of care, which is fully supported by their families. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, attend well, and develop extremely positive attitudes to learning. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of a high standard. They develop strong spiritual awareness through art, music and their good involvement in thoughtfully planned assemblies. These activities also support their cultural development particularly well. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They have very good relationships with one another and with adults because staff expectations are high and pupils follow the clear standards set. The youngest members of the school council quickly gain confidence to express their views because the older pupils value their opinions.

Pupils know it is important to keep safe and be healthy. They delight in using their 'trim-trail' and know how to play safely with others. They have a strong understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise, such as in the after-school dance club, and enjoy healthy food in their lunchboxes. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging and contribute positively to their community through well-developed links with the village, church and other local schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Excellent relationships between pupils and adults encourage extremely positive attitudes to learning. Skilled teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Strong teamwork across the teaching staff means that information about pupils is shared exceptionally well. Assessment data is used well to plan lessons and to organise activities for pupils' different abilities. Although not yet fully embedded, the new tracking system is helping teachers to measure pupils' progress more closely so that any individuals who are at risk of falling behind are quickly identified. The school is making great strides in helping pupils to develop skills of assessing their own work in literacy through the 'Steps to Success'. Pupils say that their targets 'really help' and they like 'making a wish' with the teacher about what can be improved. There is now scope to develop this good practice further across other subjects to help pupils to do even better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy learning because activities are interesting, well organised and planned to meet their different needs. Children in Reception take part in a good range of indoor and outdoor activities which encourage them to explore and to learn independently. In all classes, a strong emphasis is placed on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The school is currently embarking on a review of its curriculum to further strengthen those areas which work well and to develop greater links between subjects to increase pupils' understanding and enjoyment of learning. The recent Year 1 film-making project about different village buildings is a good example of the developing links between literacy and ICT. The curriculum is enriched with a good range of educational visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. These opportunities add considerably to pupils' personal development and enjoyment of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All adults give very good support which focuses on developing pupils' confidence, independence and responsibility. All the required procedures are firmly in place for health and safety, child protection and safeguarding pupils. Pupils are absolutely certain that they are well cared for and that adults will always help them with their work or any worries they may have. The quality of academic guidance given to pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities, is what makes this feature of the school's work particularly outstanding. Very effective procedures are used to check how well they are learning and whether they need additional support. Parents are rightly delighted with the care and attention given to their children in all aspects of their academic and personal development. One parent's comment that the school

is 'just like one big happy family with everybody looking after one another' echoes many others made.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Everyone matters in this school and strong teamwork is the key to its success. Pupils reach high standards but staff know that there is always scope to improve how well pupils achieve. The school is over-cautious about the quality of some of its work because there is a genuine belief that more can always be done to improve pupils' learning. The school has already identified the need to embed the new system for tracking pupils' progress to ensure that all pupils achieve at the highest level. Leaders and managers at all levels give a great deal of time to reviewing the quality of their work and the impact that this has on the school's performance. High quality partnerships, such as the local small schools cluster, help the school to develop and share expertise with others. The involvement of pupils, parents and governors in the self-evaluation process is a strong feature of the school's drive to include everyone on its path to further improvement. Governance is excellent. It makes a significant contribution to the day-to-day running of the school but also takes an active and positive role in its strategic development, particularly with regard to the constraints of the small school budget.

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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	1

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	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	1
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	1
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

Thank you so much for making me welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed the day I spent with you. You were a great help to me when I asked you about your work and all the things that you do at school. Thank you for being so friendly and polite.

You go to a good school and you help to make it as good as it is. These are some of the best things that I found.

- You get a really good start to school in Reception. From that point, you all learn well and reach standards which are much higher than those found in most schools.
- You are growing up to be extremely confident, independent and mature young people.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are a credit to yourselves, your school and your families.
- You are taught well in every class. Your teachers make learning interesting and fun for you and want you to do your very best.
- The school really cares about you in every way and makes sure that you feel safe and happy. It's no wonder that you enjoy coming to school so much.
- All the adults working in your school, including the governors, work hard to make it as good as it can be. They make a great team – and you are a part of it, too!

Your school is good at checking what it does well and what it needs to improve next. It knows that it needs to check even more on how well you do as you move through the school to make sure that everybody does as well as they possibly can. The teachers are using the 'Steps to Success' really well to help you improve your literacy. They think that they could use these even more to help you with all of your other work, especially to help you reach the higher levels in numeracy. I agree with them and have asked them to concentrate especially on this. You can help by checking your work carefully and thinking hard about what would make your work even better the next time round.

I wish you all well in the future.