



St Luke's Church of England VA Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122009
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292291
Inspection dates 13–14 March 2007
Reporting inspector Marion Wallace

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Main Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Old Duston
Age range of pupils	4–11		Northampton NN5 6JB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01604 752707
Number on roll (school)	155	Fax number	01604 752707
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Julie Rowley
		Headteacher	Sue Edmonds
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Luke's is smaller than most primary schools. The majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is significantly lower than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average. Most children have attended the Noah's Ark pre-school playgroup on the school site before they enter Reception. St Luke's has recently experienced re-organisation from a lower to a primary school. The school is part of the 'Excellence in Cities' cluster, a government initiative.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of St Luke's is good. It is extremely popular with pupils, parents and the local community because it is regarded by everyone as a 'large family.' Parents, pupils and staff are unanimous in their support for the school because they feel that it is a special place where everyone is valued, learning is fun and consequently pupils develop confidence and a very positive attitude to life and learning. This is reflected in the growing number of pupils joining the school.

One of the main reasons for the popularity and success of the school is the good leadership and management of the headteacher. She is challenged and supported by an excellent governing body. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve.

The school, however, is still adapting to the county re-organisation from a three- to a two-tier system. This re-organisation is challenging the school to translate the well-above-average standards reached by the end of Year 2 to similar standards in Year 6. It is working hard to ensure that new pupils entering the school in Years 5 and 6 from a variety of primary schools reach the same good standards as the younger pupils.

Attainment on entry is generally above average but can vary in year groups with small numbers. Children in Reception experience a good curriculum and are extremely well taught and consequently they make good progress, working well beyond the expected goals. Pupils continue to experience consistently high quality teaching and learning as they progress through Years 1 and 2 and consequently the majority of pupils are achieving well-above-average standards by the end of Year 2 and achievement is good. Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 6, but many pupils entering the school in Years 5 and 6 are not always at the same level as their peers and a significant proportion has learning difficulties. Standards, although generally above average, are relatively not as good as those at the end of Year 2.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is stronger, however, in Reception, Year 1 and 2, with some outstanding teaching. Teaching is mainly good in Years 3 to 6, with some satisfactory teaching when the level of challenge is not always sharp enough. Pupils who have learning difficulties make the same progress as their peers. Preparation for future economic well-being is effective, with pupils developing good personal qualities and making good progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

Personal development is a strength; spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn to make a good contribution to the school and local community. The school council is pro-active in responding to, and acting upon, pupils' views. Relationships are very good and the learning environment is safe and stimulating. All pupils learn to adopt a healthy lifestyle and participate enthusiastically in the many opportunities for sport and dance. Levels of attendance have recently slipped from good to satisfactory because more families are taking holidays in term time. Pupils experience a good level of care, and procedures to ensure academic progress is

maintained are effective. The curriculum is good because it is generally well matched to the needs of pupils and provides lots of enrichment opportunities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure pupils build consistently on the standards they achieve at Key Stage 1, so that they maintain well-above-average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Ensure the level of challenge is sharp and consistent in Years 3 to 6.
- Introduce strategies to halt the slight decline in levels of attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children in Reception make significant progress in all areas of learning because they benefit from high quality teaching and learning. They enter Year 1 above average and some are well above average, especially in mathematical development and speaking skills. Pupils continue to make good gains in their learning and consequently the majority enter Year 3 well above average in reading, writing and mathematics; this is reflected in test results for 2005–6. Excellent use of problem solving and 'talking partners' is challenging all pupils effectively and contributes to the good progress.

Key Stage 2 test results at the end of 2006 were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. However, a significant number of pupils (58%) joined the school from other lower schools at the start of Year 5 or 6 and 44% of the cohort had learning difficulties, which had a limiting effect on the overall profile of the school's performance. In the current Year 6 there is a similar picture and attainment on entry for this year group was lower than for the current Reception class. Standards seen in Year 6 are above average in English and science and average in mathematics. The school's efficient tracking system indicates that a high percentage of pupils are on course to achieve above-average standards this year in English, mathematics and science, and this represents good achievement. Data show that pupils who have been in the school since Key Stage 1 make good progress; this also includes pupils with learning difficulties and the few pupils who do not speak English as their first language.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils work and play well together. They are polite and demonstrate mature sensitivity to the needs and views of others. This is evident in class discussions and was shown in their spontaneous applause for the recorder group who played in assembly. Pupils have very positive attitudes and their behaviour is good because the school's emphasis on developing these aspects has been very successful. As a result, the quality of relationships with peers and adults is very good and is underpinned by a very positive 'caring contract' which is signed by pupils and teachers. The many cultural and multicultural experiences help pupils develop appreciation of the wider world. Pupils benefit from the wide range of physical activities and recognise their contribution to

a healthy lifestyle. They know how to stay safe and enjoy taking responsibility. Pupils develop initiative and independence because they know their contributions will be appreciated by others. They learn to make a valuable contribution to the school and wider community because the school provides them with plenty of opportunities to consider the needs of others. More families take holidays in term time and consequently, attendance has slipped from above average to average in recent years.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Children experience high quality teaching in Reception and Year 2 which enables them to get off to a flying start and attain well-above-average standards in Year 2. Throughout the rest of the school, teaching is mainly good but occasionally satisfactory because expectation and challenge is not as sharp as it could be.

Planning is consistently good and takes account of the different abilities of pupils in the class. All pupils develop confidence because teachers are supportive and communicate enthusiasm for learning. Teachers use interactive whiteboards and a range of strategies well to capture pupils' interest and involve them in their learning. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and those with additional gifts and talents, so these pupils make good gains in their learning. The quality of marking is consistently good because it challenges and informs pupils how to improve their work. The good assessment procedures enable teachers to check pupils' progress and give extra support to those who need it. The 'success criteria' are understood well by pupils and parents and used effectively by all teachers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

An interesting curriculum ensures that pupils enjoy their learning. Planning is detailed and generally well matched to pupils' abilities. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enrich other subject areas has improved significantly since the last inspection. Literacy is also used well, but the application of numeracy and science is less well developed. The personal, social and health education provision contributes to the strong, caring ethos in the school. Good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and there is a well-structured programme in place to support the needs of gifted and talented pupils. A good range of visits, visitors such as the African Drummers and special days with a subject focus such as art or science enrich the provision. There are very strong links with the local community, including the church and local business groups. The many clubs and activities are very popular and well attended, such as choir, tap dance, basketball and dance.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff know and care for their pupils well and consequently pupils are happy and safe in school. Very good child protection procedures are in place. The school is at the forefront on many issues of this aspect and regular training is undertaken by staff. Relationships are very good, which has a very positive impact on pupils and creates an atmosphere where problems can be discussed should they arise. The pupils' learning benefits considerably from the outstanding relationships between the school and parents. Pupils with learning difficulties receive effective support because their individual education plans are well matched to their needs.

Support for academic development is good. The very effective tracking of pupils' progress is well supported by good quality marking. Achievable and helpful targets are set which provide good guidance for pupils' future learning. However, targets for older pupils are sometimes insufficiently challenging and this can limit their response.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school extremely well and has the confidence and respect of pupils, staff, parents and members of the local community. As a result, St Luke's is a happy, friendly place where pupils and staff enjoy their time together because they all feel valued. All staff and governors contribute to the well-considered plans for the next stage of development, which is informed by a rigorous review of all aspects of the school's work. As a result, an analysis of test results in mathematics led to action being taken to improve calculation and problem-solving skills and is leading to improved standards. The headteacher is very good at enlisting the support of subject leaders to track and monitor the outcomes of developmental action. For example, the use of ICT to enrich other subject areas has improved through consultation with subject leaders. Strong teamwork is evident in the recent launch of 'assessment for learning' and 'success criteria' are used consistently well by all teachers. However, leadership and management have not yet managed to ensure the very high standards reached in Year 2 are maintained at the end of Year 6, but they are on line to do so. Governors make an excellent contribution, responding strategically to concerns such as the proposed new building. They have an excellent view of the school's strengths, relative weaknesses and development, and this allows them to play an important part in the school development planning.

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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	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	2
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	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 very much for welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers. We will remember how courteous and considerate you were, especially when we joined you for lunch. We really enjoyed listening to your beautiful singing and the recorder group.

These are the things we liked most about your school:

- When you first come to the school in Reception, you make a good start to your education and you do well as you progress through the school, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- Many of you said that yours is a good school and we agree with you.
- Your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and fun.
- You are all extremely polite, well behaved and consider the needs of others and this contributes to the friendly atmosphere. You told us that the school is like a big 'family.'
- You thoroughly enjoy school and all the activities, including those that take place outside the school day. These all help you learn to lead active, healthy lifestyles.
- Your school is very well led and managed and this contributes to your enjoyment of school, and helps you feel safe and well cared for.
- Your parents work well with your teachers and this helps you to make good gains in your learning and there is good support for those who need extra help.

But to make things even better, we have suggested a few things that we think will help:

- The older pupils make good progress but it is not as good as that of the younger pupils, who make very good progress. We want all Year 5 and 6 pupils to work extremely hard, especially in mathematics, so that progress throughout the school can be consistently very good.
- Your levels of attendance are not as good as they were several years ago so we think you and your parents should all help the teachers to raise levels of attendance from satisfactory back to good.

We wish you well for the future