

All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124776
Local Authority	SUFFOLK
Inspection number	293110
Inspection date	14 June 2007
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 category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	109
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Maidstone
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Elliott (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002
School address	Framlingham Road Laxfield Suffolk IP13 8HD
Telephone number	01986 798344
Fax number	01986 798861

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Pupils are taught in four classes in this small village school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. All pupils are from White British backgrounds. Skill levels on entry are broadly in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average overall, but in some year groups it is high. Most pupils are from within the village and surrounding area but a significant number come from further afield and join the school in Years 3, 4 and 5. A new headteacher has been appointed and will join the school in September. The deputy headteacher has been acting headteacher over the past year. The school has an Artsmark Gold award and an Activemark for sports.

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. It has some outstanding features. The curriculum is excellent and includes great emphasis on the performing and visual arts. Film making, dance, painting and sculpture feature strongly. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. All groups, including those with learning difficulties and the more able, flourish. Pupils are self-assured and become confident learners. Parents from far and wide are attracted by the school's good reputation and there is considerable pressure to gain entry. Pupils have a good understanding of how to eat sensibly, keep fit and lead healthy life styles. They enjoy school and are eager to learn. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. There is an excellent programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure in school. Their attendance rate is high.

Achievement is good and standards are generally well above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve well. Teachers have analysed pupils' performance carefully and have correctly identified writing as an area for improvement, especially among the more able pupils. Although standards in writing are above average they are not as high as in reading, mathematics and science. Challenging targets, for each year group to attain in writing, have been set but these have not yet been reached.

Teaching is good and promotes effective learning. Technology, such as interactive white boards, computers, digital cameras and film-making equipment, is used well to fire pupils' imaginations. Teachers plan lessons carefully but plans do not always include exactly how the faster learners will be sufficiently challenged so that they reach the highest standards. The good social and academic skills that pupils develop form a secure platform for their future economic well-being.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and it has correctly judged its overall effectiveness to be good. The acting headteacher, supported by a visiting consultant headteacher, has managed the school extremely well this year. They have introduced good systems for measuring progress and are using them well to set targets for improvement. The governing body is very supportive and is closely involved in school development. Governors hold the leadership of the school to account for maintaining high standards. Finances are managed well and the school provides good value for money. Staff and governors constantly explore ways to improve provision. Systems to analyse performance are robust and are used well to identify priorities. The school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Explore all avenues to help pupils, especially the more able, to reach their targets in writing.
- Include in teachers' lesson plans details on how the faster learners will be provided with challenging work that stretches them fully.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children settle happily in the Reception class where they make good progress. Most attain the expected standard by the end of the Reception year and frequently some exceed expectations. Each year group is small and has a very different mix of both more able pupils and pupils with learning difficulties. Most pupils make good progress and achieve well in Years 1 and 2. By Year 2, standards are usually above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In the national

assessments for pupils in Year 2 in 2006 the school's results were exceptionally high in reading, writing and mathematics. This group had very few pupils with learning difficulties. This year, assessments show that standards are above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Pupils have done well to attain these results as this year's group of Year 2 pupils has a high proportion with learning difficulties. Pupils usually achieve well in Years 3 to 6. They make good progress as demonstrated in national test results. In 2006 the school's results were well above average in English, mathematics and science. This year standards in Year 6 are not as high because a third of the year group has learning difficulties but these pupils achieve well. The school has developed a reputation for dealing successfully with pupils who have specific learning difficulties. They invariably make good progress. A significant number of such pupils join the school in Years 3, 4 and 5. The school is also recognised for excellence in the arts and this attracts many parents who seek to gain places for their children.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This is a key strength of the school. Pupils are constantly encouraged to become increasingly independent and to use their initiative. Behaviour is exemplary. Play leaders organise games at playtimes and older pupils run lunchtime clubs for the younger ones. The school council raises funds to provide playground equipment. The dance and drama performances that feature so strongly help pupils to develop poise and composure. One particularly significant strength is the way that pupils' emotional development is fostered. They are encouraged to express their feelings freely and are happy to express emotions sensitively in creative writing, dance, drama and painting. The first two stanzas of a sensitively written piece about the Second World War are typical:

'His voice, slow, rang out
Over crystalline waters and fountains.
It charged where the poppies blow
And sang to the dead.
How it woke and stirred their spirits
We shall never know,
But they could smell the fumes of battle
The charging guns below.'

Staff offer considerable encouragement so pupils develop high levels of self-esteem and become confident learners. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are encouraged to think of others and understand the contribution they can make to communities less fortunate than their own

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

A calm, purposeful and productive learning environment has been established throughout the school. In the Reception class children are bubbling with enthusiasm to learn more about their world. The teacher has created a stimulating learning environment which excites children's

imagination. Their dinosaur project has inspired them to produce lovely pictures and interesting writing as a result of their research. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils are well motivated and have a serious approach to their work. Teaching assistants are very much part of the teaching team and are totally in tune with the teachers' approach. Teachers use the new interactive white boards well to support teaching and learning but their full potential is still being explored. Pupils achieve well because teachers plan interesting lessons that are often based on visits to places of interest. Pupils achieve particularly well when activities are linked to real purposes, such as writing letters to pupils in a school in China. However, teachers do not always provide enough challenge for the more able, especially in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum provides pupils with a rich and well-rounded education. Dance features strongly and is linked to themes, such as the Blitz, and the school's agricultural setting. The school has produced a superb film, 'Soil Dance', that is used as a teaching tool nationally. Pupils produce stunning work in art and design. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used exceptionally well to create visual images that form the basis for pupils' own imaginative art work. Music is strong. Pupils sing well and many play instruments. The school's Samba band produces complex rhythms and a powerful beat. Music, dance and creative writing are combined in the school's acclaimed performances at Snape Maltings. Pupils have good writing skills and create sensitive prose and poetry. They learn how to make films with their own musical compositions forming the sound track. Sport is strong, with cricket and swimming being well represented.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pastoral care is a strong feature of the school that supports learning well. Ensuring the safety of pupils is given the highest priority. Child protection procedures are in place and are understood by all staff. Pupils say they feel secure in the school. There is an excellent personal, social and health education programme. Pupils receive clear guidance about how to stay safe and lead healthy lifestyles. They say that they feel well supported by all staff and would feel comfortable about sharing problems or concerns with their teachers. Academic guidance is good. Pupils are given good advice through teachers' marking of work and individual consultations about how to improve. Targets for learning are clear so that pupils know what to do to reach the next stages in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Although there has been no substantive headteacher in post this year, the school has not lost momentum and has continued to improve on many fronts. Systems to measure the amount of progress that individual pupils make each term in literacy and numeracy have been introduced. This has helped the school to produce clearer targets for improvement and to identify areas for development. In this school standards do not rise year on year but vary according to the characteristics of each year group. The school's good systems for measuring progress demonstrate that all pupils, whatever their starting points, make good progress. The team of teachers and support staff have supported the acting headteacher wholeheartedly during her

period of leadership and together they have worked hard to continue improving the quality of education provided for their pupils. The school is highly inclusive and welcomes new pupils whenever spaces are available. Parents are delighted with the education provided for their children. The ethos of the school is based on its conviction that every child matters.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	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	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?	1
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.

Annex A

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

15 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Laxfield, Suffolk, IP13 8HD

What a lovely school! I thoroughly enjoyed my short visit. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful.

I was impressed by many things about your school. Your behaviour is excellent and you love learning new things. You work hard but also enjoy having fun. You produce some superb work in art and design. The fabric work based on the patchwork of fields around Laxfield is stunning. The clay work is fantastic. Your art work makes the whole building look so colourful and interesting. You are good at using digital cameras and at making films. You sing beautifully. You sang the school song so sensitively during assembly and the clarity of the solo alto soprano parts stirred emotions. The Samba band organise themselves well without any grown-ups to help them and they produce powerful rhythms. Your school council is great. They raise money for playground equipment and even persuaded the equipment company to give you some free things. They have helped the governors to select a new headteacher who will join you in September. You always do your best and so you make good progress in your learning. You do well in learning to read and write. You are developing a wide range of skills in mathematics and science. You use computers confidently to help you with your learning. You are brilliant at creating beautiful dance sequences and you enjoy sport. The grounds are lovely and the solar heated swimming pool is used well so that everybody learns to swim. Your vegetable garden produces really fresh food for the kitchen. You know how to stay safe and look after yourselves and others. All the teachers and support staff are keen to make the school even better and to make your lessons even more exciting.

There's not much to do to make the school even better. Mrs Elliott knows that some of you, particularly the faster learners, do not always reach standards that are high enough, especially in writing. I have asked the staff to make sure that the quicker learners are really challenged to reach the highest possible standards.

I wish you every success in the future.

John Messer

(Lead inspector)