

# St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School Danbury

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115112
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	311838
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Marianne Harris

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Patricia Breeze
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Christine Cooper
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	Little Baddow Road Danbury Chelmsford Essex CM3 4NS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245222173
<b>Fax number</b>	01245223728

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school. The inspector looked particularly at the support for pupils who join the school part-way through their education; provision for the most able pupils; and the improvements in the Foundation Stage. The inspector met with staff, governors and pupils. Parts of some lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including self-evaluation, was scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

This is an average-sized school with a growing number of pupils who are learning English as an additional language, a small number of whom are at an early stage. The proportion of pupils who find learning difficult is average, with some needing support for language development and autism. The proportion of pupils joining the school part-way through their education, some of whom are from overseas, is above average. The school has received an Active Sports award and is working towards green Eco-school status. Children's skills and knowledge when they join the school in the Foundation Stage are in line with those expected for their age.

## 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. The headteacher has successfully led the drive to raise standards whilst providing an exciting curriculum and promoting pupils' personal development effectively. All groups of pupils are included in the life of the school and support for those who join part-way through their education is good. There is a series of induction programmes so that all are welcomed and pupils are particularly proud of the ways that they befriend as a matter of course those who come from overseas. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are supported well by knowledgeable staff so that they settle in to school quickly and make good progress.

Standards have risen over the recent past, are above average and indications are that they will continue to rise. In the 2007 national tests, standards were above average in all subjects for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. They were particularly high in reading for pupils at the end of Year 2 because the school had accurately identified the need to focus on this aspect of learning. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. The most able have education plans that detail their needs so that they can make good progress and not become disenchanted with learning. Those who find learning difficult receive good support so that many reach the expected standards. Some parents have raised concerns over standards because they feel that some inappropriate behaviour affects their children's learning. This is unfounded. Staff are particularly skilful at meeting the needs of pupils who find it hard to always behave well and, when asked, other pupils reported that 'we just focus on our work and concentrate' so that their lessons are not interrupted. Behaviour is generally good.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, and also their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Much money is raised for national and local charities and pupils are very proud of this, organising some events themselves. They have a good understanding of how to eat a healthy diet and that exercise is important. Staff place much importance on providing good care, guidance and support for all pupils so that they feel safe and know that there is always someone they can go to if they have a problem. The school council is active and its members know that they have a voice in the running of the school. Those pupils involved in gaining the coveted green Eco-School status are leading their classmates in the promotion of recycling and saving energy. Pupils are obviously proud of their school and enjoy learning. Attendance is above average. There is little that pupils would change, and they particularly like their teachers and learning lots of different things. They are well prepared for their futures through their good personal development and the standards they attain.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and exciting. Pupils know exactly what their targets are and enjoy sharing these with others. Staff mark work in books well; pupils are encouraged to work hard and are also given points to think about in order to improve their work. Those who find learning difficult and those who are more able have tasks that are matched effectively to their abilities so that all can fully participate in lessons. However, opportunities to support pupils' personal development are not fully exploited in all lessons; their capacity to organise themselves is not always drawn on in helping them to learn. There are many times when there is excessive use of worksheets so that pupils do not have enough opportunities to record their work for themselves or decide how it should be set out.

Pupils are most excited about all the opportunities they are given to learn beyond normal lessons. These have great impact on their enjoyment of school and their eagerness to learn. They are really keen on their Spanish lessons and the opportunities that all have to learn to

swim. They talk excitedly about trips into the local and wider community and look forward to the residential trip. Every step is taken to ensure that the school is warm and welcoming and child protection procedures are robust and thorough.

The school is well led and managed and governance is satisfactory. The staff work well together as a team and share the common aim of raising and maintaining standards. Many parents comment that their children love school and that the staff are very welcoming and listen to their views. However, a small minority of parents remain concerned over recent changes and feel they do not reflect how the school has been in the past. They are not certain that standards are as high as they were or that the time spent on some activities is worthwhile. The school acknowledges that there have been concerns and has made efforts to tackle them, with some success. Since the time of the last inspection there has been good improvement, with standards rising every year. There is good capacity to improve further as the staff team evaluate their work effectively and strive to improve provision throughout the school and reflect the Christian ethos to which they are so committed.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children make particularly good progress in their early reading and writing skills and in their personal development. By the time they enter Year 1 most have reached the standards expected for their age and some have exceeded them. Tasks and activities are well planned so that children settle into school quickly and learn how to work together cooperatively. There is a good balance of activities between those that children choose for themselves and others that are led by an adult. Although there are times when the children sit for too long listening to an adult, they generally concentrate well and persevere at activities.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that pupils are more involved in recording their own work.
- Provide parents with more information about pupils' standards of work and behaviour in order to help them understand how these are supported by the wide range of activities provided in lessons and out of school.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	3
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



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**Annex B**

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

23 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 4NS

Thank you very much for welcoming me into your school a few days ago and for telling me all about your work. As promised, I am now writing to let you know what I found out.

You told me that your school is good and I agree. You all behave well, work hard and make good progress. I was particularly impressed with the standard of reading in the school and by the way you all looked after each other. I enjoyed hearing about how you stay healthy and safe. My favourite part was tasting the 'smoothie' that one of you so kindly brought to me. I particularly liked hearing about the money you have raised and how you organised the cake sale. I wish the Eco-council good luck in gaining green status for the school. When talking to some of you it was good to hear how you support each other, particularly those who are new to the school.

Your teachers are good at planning lessons and making sure that the work is challenging for you all and not too easy. I have asked them to cut down on the number of worksheets they give you so that you have the opportunity to record for yourselves and decide how to organise your work.

I talked at length to your headteacher because some of your parents are not sure that behaviour in the school is as good as it is, or that you are all making such good progress. I know that the teachers are trying to let all your parents know about the good things that you do and how much help this is. I have asked them to think of more ways of letting families know how well you are doing. I am now asking you to help them by telling your parents more about your work and how much the extra activities help you to learn.

Thank you once again for being so helpful and I wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Marianne Harris

Lead inspector