

St Osyth Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115257
Local Authority	ESSEX LA
Inspection number	311891
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2007
Reporting inspector	David Herbert

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Yrina Morgan-Kendall
Headteacher	Mr Tim Palmer
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2003
School address	Norman Close St Osyth Clacton on sea CO16 8PN
Telephone number	01255 820823
Fax number	01255 822247

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school, situated in the large village of St Osyth, draws pupils from a wide geographical area. Because of local housing circumstances, pupil mobility is above average; over a quarter of all pupils join or leave the school at times other than the normal points of entry and transfer. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average. Almost all pupils are White British and none has English as an additional language.

The school has the Investors in People and Healthy Schools Awards. It is a member of the Tendring Excellence Cluster of schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This happy school provides pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. Its greatest strength lies in the way it welcomes all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and helps them to settle effectively whenever they join the school. This enables all pupils to enjoy school and make good progress in their personal development. The great majority of parents recognise and appreciate this aspect of the school's work. One parent said, 'St Osyth has a very caring approach to all children and a real sense of community spirit'.

Achievement is satisfactory. Most, but not all children start in the Foundation Stage, with levels of knowledge and understanding that is slightly below that expected for this age. Pupils make sound progress throughout the school. Test results, at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 vary from year to year, but are broadly average overall. Standards are slightly weaker in mathematics than in English.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy everything the school offers and grow into responsible young people who act safely and have a good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles. They recognise that they are an important part of the school and the wider community. All staff provide pupils with good levels of pastoral care, guidance and support. As a result, pupils are polite and have positive attitudes to their work. Warm relationships and an atmosphere of trust help pupils to feel safe and secure. Therefore, pupils confidently seek help from adults, and support one another considerately. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers plan sequences of lessons in detail. Pupils who need extra help get good support from teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils know their long-term targets, but are not clear enough about how to improve their work from week to week. Teachers mark pupils work regularly and make encouraging comments, but the feedback is not precise enough to help them understand what they have done well and how they can improve their work. This limits the rate of progress made by pupils.

The satisfactory curriculum includes good opportunities for pupils to experience a range of extra-curricular activities and visit places of interest. However, the school is at an early stage of development in relation to enhancing learning by linking subjects. For example, the school is beginning to identify opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Adults and pupils use the school's information and communication technology (ICT) resources confidently. This contributes satisfactorily to developing pupils' skills across the curriculum. Good extension activities are provided for pupils with particular talents and abilities; sometimes in partnership with other local schools. Satisfactory leadership, management and governance has enabled the school to improve since the last inspection, for example, standards in writing are now broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. However, the school rightly recognises the need to raise standards across the school, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Appropriate plans are in place to do so. Leaders make consistent and strenuous efforts to increase the level of attendance, but this remains below average. Nevertheless, detailed improvement planning and the high level of commitment of the headteacher and staff mean that the school has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children settle well in the Foundation Stage. This is due to the good support given by staff who get to know children individually; helping them to feel valued and ready to learn. A satisfactory curriculum is provided which includes an appropriate balance of adult and child led activities. Children enjoy these experiences. However, learning programmes do not focus sufficiently well on meeting the needs of individual children to enable them to make more than satisfactory progress. Whole class sessions engage children, for example, in building their own telescopes and exploring the effects of looking through coloured transparency sheets.

What the school should do to improve further

- Carry out plans to raise standards in English, mathematics and science across the school.
- Provide feedback to pupils so that they are always clear about what they need to do next to improve.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start in the Foundation Stage with levels of knowledge and skills that are slightly below those expected. Personal, social and emotional development is often the weakest area. Although children make sound progress, by the time they leave the Foundation Stage standards are generally still slightly below the levels expected for their age. However, year groups vary and those currently in the Foundation group are generally attaining levels that are above those expected. Standards at the end of Year 2 fluctuate but pupils are currently on target to reach the levels expected for their age. Pupils reach standards that are broadly average by Year 6. Some pupils leave the school before Year 6 but significant numbers of pupils join the school, particularly during Key Stage 2. Some pupils spend only a short time at the school but regardless of this, the vast majority make satisfactory progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included well and make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are introduced sensitively to the importance of prayer and worship and have a good appreciation of the responsibility of belonging to the school and wider community. Pupils cooperate well in class and establish positive relationships. Behaviour in class and around the school is good. Pupils acknowledge that occasionally a small number exhibit inappropriate behaviour and are sometimes too rough at playtime. They report that the few incidents of bullying that do occur are quickly addressed by teachers. Pupils like coming to school and several are particularly pleased with the range of after school clubs provided for them. Despite the school's best efforts, the rate of attendance has remained at just below the national level. Pupils' attitudes to learning, ability to cooperate and basic skills prepare them soundly for their future education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers manage pupils in positive ways so that they show enthusiastic participation in not only their own lessons, but also when older pupils pair with younger ones to help them with their reading. Teachers' lesson planning is usually detailed and has clear objectives. Teaching assistants work effectively with pupils who need additional support. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough. Some marking of pupils' work pinpoints what pupils have done well and shows them how to improve, but this practise is not embedded across the school. Although pupils know their longer-term learning targets, they have limited impact because they do not always link to the work in hand. Consequently, many pupils are unsure of the next learning steps that they need to achieve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors that interest and enthuse pupils. A good variety of extra-curricular activities such as sport, craft, and drama contribute well to pupils' social development and are much enjoyed. The school recognises the need to develop appropriate links between subjects and provide more creative and practical learning opportunities. For example, the school is working with 'Creative Partnerships' to improve the variety of pupils' experiences. Learning in ICT is planned well to support and extend learning in other subjects. The personal, social and health education programme is successful in developing pupils' understanding of safe and healthy living.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Overall, care, guidance and support for pupils is satisfactory. The school has a good, caring ethos and provision for pupils who are vulnerable or at risk is strong. All adults know the pupils and their families well, creating what one parent calls, 'a real sense of community spirit'. Other agencies are consulted when appropriate. Risk assessments are in place and child protection procedures are taken seriously. Pupils say that they feel confident that there is someone at school they can go to if they feel concerned. The learning mentors and the newly established family liaison officer are already having a positive impact on pupils' personal development. A good range of assessment data is collected to support academic guidance but this is not yet being used well enough to track pupils' progress and inform planning so that the school can ensure that pupils do as well as they might.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leaders and managers ensure that the school operates smoothly and happily. The headteacher successfully maintains the focus on each pupil so that all are known and valued as individuals. A number of parents specifically mention how the school has recognised and supported their children's individual difficulties or needs well.

The headteacher has a strong commitment to improvement. He successfully seeks partnerships with other schools and the local authority to support him in his endeavours. Governors are closely involved in school life and are supportive. Overall, the school evaluates its performance accurately. It has identified appropriate priorities for development and there are detailed and well-focused plans for raising attainment. Innovative leadership roles and strong teamwork involves all staff in improvement work. Teachers meet regularly to monitor the progress of their pupils towards long-term targets and an extensive range of data is collected. However, these strategies are relatively recent and are not yet influencing pupils' progress and attainment. Leaders are aware that the marking of pupils' work and feedback to them is not yet consistent across all classes or robust enough to bring about an increase in pupils' rate of progress. There are sturdy procedures to monitor and encourage attendance, but this remains below average.

Annex A

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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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 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	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

5 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Osyth Church of England Primary School, St Osyth, CO16 8PN

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you about what you do in school, looking at your work and watching you learn in lessons. We think that you develop well during your time in the school, growing into kind and polite young people.

We were pleased to see that you behave well and enjoy being together. This means your teachers can get on with helping you to learn in your lessons. You work hard, and make satisfactory progress, but we think that you might be able to do even better, especially in English, mathematics and science. We have asked your teachers to make sure that you know what your learning targets are from week to week and to give you helpful feedback on your work. This will help you know what you need to do to keep improving even faster.

You told us that you like all the different activities that you do in school, in lessons and in extra clubs, and especially the different visits and visitors. All the staff and governors are working hard to make your school even better. With your hard work and help, we think that you can achieve this together.

Thank you again for helping us find out about St Osyth Primary School. Keep on doing your very best and enjoy your time at the school.

Yours sincerely

David Herbert Lead inspector