

# Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118848
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	313117
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Missin

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 aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	472
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Keith Blakemore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Graham Howard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	Trinity Road Gravesend DA12 1LU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01474 534746
<b>Fax number</b>	01474 534345

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This school is bigger than most other primary schools. A much higher than usual proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, the most numerous being Asian or Asian British Indian or Bangladeshi, and Black British African. A small proportion of these pupils are learning English for the first time. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just above average and an average proportion are eligible for free school meals. The school is now heavily oversubscribed. The school has achieved a Healthy School Award and an Eco School Silver Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This good, effective school puts the needs of individual pupils clearly at the heart of its work and successfully balances concerns for the pastoral support of pupils and their academic progress. The school's strongly caring ethos is effectively summarised by the following comment from a parent: 'My child has gained in confidence, takes pride in his achievements, and he is willing to try his best because he knows that he is valued at school.' Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They have an exceptionally mature understanding of how to keep healthy and they make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. They appreciate their responsibilities as play leaders and school councillors and they are introduced to a very wide range of different cultural experiences. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to school are consistently good and impact well on the good progress that they make. Pupils say how much they enjoy school and rates of attendance have continued to be exceptionally high. Pupils have a mature understanding of right and wrong and of the importance of prayer and spiritual reflection.

Across the school, pupils achieve well and make good progress in their learning because teaching is good and there has been a consistently successful focus on standards in English. Standards are generally well below those expected for their age when they start in the Nursery, below average by the beginning of Year 1, especially in language and communication, broadly average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. The progress made in English, particularly in writing, has been consistently good and often very good. However, progress in science has been only satisfactory and has depressed the school's overall standards for several years. Too few pupils in Year 6 achieve the higher Level 5. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because the curriculum and teaching are good and are well matched to these young children's needs.

Where teaching is strongest, teachers manage pupils well and create a respectful and responsive learning environment where pupils are valued and are keen to do their best. Sometimes, however, work for more able pupils is not sufficiently demanding, especially in science, where pupils experience limited opportunities for investigative work. This limits the progress which they make. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is not consistently used to show pupils how to improve. A lot of assessment data are collected and this information is beginning to be used more effectively to track the progress that pupils are making. However, the use of data to set learning targets for pupils has not yet been consistently established. The curriculum is well balanced between basic literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. It is also suitably broad, including good aspects such as work on environmental issues and wider world events through the children's newspaper. It is extended well through interesting visits and visitors to the school.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school based on the strong school ethos, and all members of the school community support this vision. Senior staff, some of whom are currently being introduced to their posts, are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and are supporting the school's leadership well. School improvement planning is detailed and helpfully contains useful action plans devised by coordinators. The strengths in this school, as demonstrated in the progress it has made in raising standards, give it good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

New children are settled quickly into school and are effectively introduced to routines and expectations. When they begin, many have little knowledge of English and have limited social skills. Teaching is good. All staff work hard to provide a rich and stimulating environment and support and encourage all children well. Good use is made of both the indoor and outdoor resource areas. The curriculum is good and children are interested by exciting activities such as growing vegetables, cooking and eating them. Useful records are maintained of what children know and can do and this is beginning to be used to track the progress that they make. The new Foundation Stage manager leads well. She has rightly identified the procedures for transition from Reception to Year 1 as a relative weakness.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and achievement in science, especially for more able pupils in Year 6, by providing more opportunities for them to undertake investigations.
- Develop a more consistent approach to using assessment data to ensure that pupils know clearly how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Across the school, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Most children make good progress in the Foundation Stage to reach standards which are close to average in some areas of learning but still below average in language and communication. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average in reading and mathematics but above average in writing, where progress has been very good. Standards in Year 6 are above average in English and mathematics but only average in science, where fewer pupils reach the higher Level 5. Progress in science is slower because teachers do not consistently challenge the more able pupils well enough. Pupils who need extra help with their learning and those learning English for the first time make good progress because of the good support they receive.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an important strength of the school. Attendance is excellent because pupils enjoy school. They are friendly, polite and welcoming to visitors. Most behave very well and they are keen to take on responsibilities, for example as 'play leaders' and 'helping hands'. School councillors take the role seriously and are keen to be more influential. Pupils demonstrate care for others through support for charities. They are proud their school is 'green' and show real responsibility for the environment. For example, they make bird boxes, feed the school hedgehog and were delighted to find a rare orchid growing in the grounds. Pupils feel safe. They say bullying is very rare and 'racism really isn't an issue' – even with the broad racial mix in the school. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of healthy eating habits, the importance of exercise and the dangers of drugs, alcohol and smoking. As a result of these strengths and their good key skills, pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education and later life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers manage pupils well, including several who demonstrate challenging behaviour. Most have high expectations about good behaviour and consistently support and value pupils' work and their contributions to class discussion. Where teaching is most effective, teachers provide interesting activities for pupils so that they enjoy lessons. For example, the Year 6 lessons comparing the characteristics of snails and slugs secured pupils' interest and commitment to their learning very well. Interactive whiteboards are used well to capture and keep pupils' interest. Teachers use questioning effectively and skilfully introduce and reinforce new vocabulary. Pupils who need extra help get good support and achieve their targets. However, sometimes more able pupils do not get sufficiently challenging and demanding work and the marking of pupils' work does not always show them how to improve.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy a stimulating curriculum, which is appropriately focused on basic literacy and numeracy provision but also provides many opportunities to use computers. The provision for English has been consistently strong but the promotion of investigational work, particularly in science, is not yet fully secure. Several innovative initiatives help to enliven the curriculum. Pupils make interesting educational visits and use the locality well, for example to understand local heritage or the impact of new businesses on their town. They take part in many local events and celebrations and represent their school in sports, drama and music. Themed events such as Green Day, Sports Week and learning French broaden pupils' experiences. Older pupils learn about the wider world through regular access to a children's newspaper, and the school is linked with an African orphanage. An extensive range of clubs enable pupils to develop social skills and to mix with one another.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

A very caring and supportive ethos underpins all the school's work. This is much appreciated by parents and pupils. Pupils say, 'The school is really kind to pupils with learning disabilities' and that it 'really looks after you if you are hurt'. Vulnerable pupils, and often their families too, receive very good support, particularly through the work of the family liaison officer. Procedures to identify a range of needs are good. Good quality support from teaching assistants and the well-organised programmes, such as 'Reading Recovery', which supports individual pupils with reading difficulties, ensure that these pupils make good progress. Effective systems have recently been introduced to identify pupils who may not be making the expected progress. Pupils have learning targets. However, the quality and usefulness of the targets and the way they are managed are too variable across the school to ensure that they are fully effective in supporting pupils' learning. There are appropriate procedures to ensure the safety, security and health of the pupils and good transfer procedures ensure a smooth move to secondary schools.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher leads the school well and effectively promotes the school's caring ethos. The school has worked hard and successfully to secure the confidence of most of its parents and to establish an impressive sense of community and a high profile in the local area. Governors have a secure knowledge of the school and are very supportive. Appropriate priorities are identified in the school improvement plan, and are based on the school's accurate knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. However, there is insufficient use of available data to help the school judge how successful initiatives have been. Senior leadership is currently in a changing phase with the forthcoming retirement of the deputy headteacher. The headteacher is managing this change well by sensitively introducing other leaders into the management team. This will provide an opportunity to define their roles and responsibilities in more detail. A continuing strength is the effectiveness of the whole-school focus on standards and achievement in English.

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## 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?	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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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	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**

8 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Gravesend, DA12 1LU

Thank you for making my colleagues and me so welcome when we came to the school recently to see how well you were doing.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school:

- Children in the Foundation Stage settle quickly and make a good start to their time at school.
- You all enjoy what the school provides and come to school very regularly.
- You all work hard and do very well with your writing.
- You all have a very good understanding of what being healthy means, especially through the many sports activities that you are involved in.
- Your headteacher and other senior teachers ensure that you are all looked after well and are making good progress in your learning.

There are two things that we thought could be better.

- Your teachers need to make sure that you understand how well you are doing, for example through their marking of your work, and what you need to do to get better, such as through clearer learning targets.
- Teachers need to give you more opportunity to undertake investigations in science to help you all to make better progress, especially those in Year 6 who can manage harder work.

Thank you again for your welcome.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Paul Missin Lead inspector