

Sutton Courtenay All Saints' CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123162
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314520
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Mike Thompson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	100
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Anne Grimm
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Price
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Bradstocks Way Sutton Courtenay Abingdon OX14 4DA
Telephone number	01235 848333
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Sutton Courtenay All Saints' CE Primary is a small school, situated on the outskirts of an affluent village within an area of social housing. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

All Saints' Primary is a good and rapidly improving school. The excellent headteacher has transformed the school within the four years since her appointment. In the past, standards were low and pupils underachieved. Standards are now rising in reading, writing and mathematics, and pupils achieve well. The parents greatly appreciate the improvements made in their children's education. One commented, 'The only trouble I have is in knowing where to start when explaining my absolute pleasure in having my children educated at All Saints.' Parents are very clear where the credit for improvement lies. These views are accurately summarised by one parent who wrote, 'The leadership of the headteacher is remarkable.'

On entry to the Foundation Stage Unit, children's attainment is, in many cases, well below what is expected of three year-olds. The unit gives children a good start by providing them with good teaching and activities that excite and interest them. By the time they transfer to Year 1, standards are below average. Nonetheless, considering children's low starting points, this represents good progress. Pupils continue to make good progress from Year 1 to Year 6, because teaching is good and the quality of learning is very closely monitored. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, standards are close to the national average. Pupils' improved skills in basic numeracy and literacy help them to achieve well across the curriculum.

The school has identified some previous weaknesses in assessing attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. Procedures have been strengthened with the help of the local authority, but it will take a further two years until the accurate assessments now made at the end of Year 2 enable a true picture of progress to be seen in the national statistics. The robust tracking systems in place throughout the school provide clear evidence of the good progress made by pupils.

An important feature of the school, contributing strongly to the good climate for learning evident in all classes, is the good personal development and well-being of the pupils. Respect and consideration for others are everyday features of school life. Pupils say that they really enjoy being at school. The good rates of attendance are testimony to this. All Saints is a school in which each child matters. All pupils are warmly welcomed and equally valued. The pastoral care provided is exceptionally good. As a result, pupils feel safe and happy. The school gives good academic guidance to its pupils. There are rigorous systems for checking on what individuals know and can do. As part of the programme in place to raise attainment, teachers set clear targets for pupils in English and mathematics. These have been particularly successful in helping ensure that almost all pupils now attain the level expected for Year 6. However, the targets do not provide sufficient challenge for the more able. As a result, not enough pupils exceed the nationally expected levels. The curriculum is satisfactory. Its strengths lie in the provision in the Foundation Unit and in the intense focus placed on improving basic literacy and numeracy through the school.

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. Much of the day-to-day monitoring is carried out very thoroughly by the headteacher. However, subject managers lack the expertise to effectively monitor the impact of initiatives on pupils' achievement and progress. Governance is good. The governing body works well with the headteacher to help provide clear direction for the school.

The way in which the school has raised standards is a clear indication of its good capacity for continued improvement in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide challenging targets for more able pupils.
- Develop the role of subject managers.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, achievement is good and pupils make good progress, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

On entry to the Foundation Unit, a significant proportion of children have very limited skills in communicating with adults or one another, and weak social skills. In all other areas of learning, their attainment is below what is normally expected at this age. They make good progress throughout their Foundation Stage years, and particularly good progress in learning to get on with one another, take turns, and share equipment. This provides a good basis for future learning. However, despite good progress, the proportion of children working at the levels expected nationally for five year-olds is still below average by the time they transfer to Year 1

By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are below average despite the good progress made. The assessments of pupils' attainment made in 2006, which were validated by the local authority, showed standards to be much lower than assessments in previous years had indicated.

At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English and mathematics, which were well below average when the headteacher was appointed, have risen each year and are now broadly average. The school is not content with its current achievements and wants standards to be even higher. It is aware that common features in each key stage are the lower than average proportions of pupils who exceed the nationally expected levels. This is due to the fact that the targets set for these pupils to achieve are not challenging enough. In particular, the targets do not focus enough on the development of pupils' skills in solving mathematical problems and sentence structure and vocabulary in writing. Standards in science have remained close to the national average for the past four years. They have not improved because all of the school's efforts have focused on improving pupils' basic literacy and numeracy. Now that standards in English and mathematics are at an acceptable level, the school has targeted improvement in science as a priority for 2007-8.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A particularly noteworthy feature is pupils' good response to the regular opportunities provided for them to reflect on the progress they make. This has a positive impact on their self-confidence and motivates them to do even better. Pupils generally behave impeccably in lessons and when moving around the school. At play, behaviour is good. Pupils say that bullying is not a problem. When it does occur, they feel that teachers deal with it well. Pupils' good social skills are evident in the way that they chat amicably together when eating lunch, although some lack knowledge of accepted conventions for mealtimes. Pupils have positive views about their school, particularly regarding their teachers. One wrote, 'I really like this school because teachers are so nice and help me learn.'

Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to be safe and good knowledge about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next phase of their education and for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is generally good or better. Teachers successfully create a purposeful working environment in which learning is enjoyable. In all classes, lessons are well planned, teaching is lively, and teachers manage and organise their pupils well. Teaching is further strengthened by the very good support of the teaching assistants. They are effective in working alongside teachers to provide good quality help for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Teachers assess their pupils' attainment accurately, and this enables them to pitch future work at a suitably challenging level for most. However, the use of targets for groups of pupils is not proving successful in challenging all more able pupils in English and mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage curriculum acknowledges the way in which young children learn. There are good opportunities for children to make sensible choices of activities and also to work on tasks directed by adults. Good use is made of the premises to ensure that a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities provide challenges in all areas of learning, with a particular focus on developing children's social skills.

For the past few years, the curriculum planning for years 1 to 6 has rightly placed a strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. The success of this relentless focus is seen in the rising standards. However, too little emphasis is placed on science, and not enough use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning.

The range of activities to enrich the curriculum is satisfactory. There are, for example, visits to local places of interest such as the Ashmolean museum and residential trips for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to an outdoor pursuits centre. The range of after-school clubs is typical of what is offered in many other schools of a similar size.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is excellent. Health and safety and child protection arrangements are very effective. The school is quick to enlist the support of a wide range of outside agencies as necessary. The benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise are regularly promoted. For instance, through the daily 'wake-up, shake-up' session of aerobic exercise for pupils and staff, and by encouraging pupils to cycle to school. The success of this work was recognised through the Activemark award gained in 2006.

Academic guidance is good. Teachers use day-to-day assessment well to check on how pupils are progressing. They mark pupils' books carefully and give pupils clear guidance on what needs to be done to improve. Pupils give regular feedback to their teachers about how well they have understood the tasks set for them by, for example, colour-coding their written work using a

traffic-light system. Teachers can then assess the effectiveness of their teaching, and take remedial action to support pupils who have put either red or amber marks in their books. The targets set for pupils have proved highly effective in helping raise standards. However, the system currently in use does not always meet the individual needs of more able pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The impact of leadership and management is seen in the good progress made by the pupils and the rising standards. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together as a team. Together they have created an orderly and calm environment for learning. They are clearly committed to raising standards. At present, most of the monitoring is carried out by the headteacher. The leadership provided by subject managers is satisfactory; most are relatively inexperienced in having responsibility for leading aspects of the school's work. However, the impact of leadership within subjects is good because of the strong influence of the headteacher. Through the headteacher's excellent monitoring, there is an accurate understanding of the strengths to be built on and the weaknesses that need to be addressed. Governors provide useful support for the school. They know it well, carefully monitor its work and hold it to account.

The successes of leadership include the way in which it has developed effective partnerships with a wide range of outside organisations which help promote pupils' well-being. The school's excellent partnership with parents is one of the key factors in the school's success.

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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	3
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	3

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?	3
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.

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

3 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Sutton Courtenay All Saints' CofE Primary School, Abingdon, OX14 4DA

I would like to thank you very much for being so helpful when I came to visit your school. I really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at all your work.

Your parents think that you go to a good school, and I agree. Here is a list of some of the things I like best.

- You make good progress.
- You all follow the values your school teaches you. Everyone in your school is friendly and welcoming, and you behave well.
- You learn well in lessons because the teaching you are given is good.
- All of the adults in your school make sure that you are really well looked after.
- Your headteacher and the other people who help run your school are doing a good job.

Every school has something that could be better, so I have asked your school to do two things.

- I would like your teachers to set more difficult targets for those of you who find your work is sometimes too easy.
- I would also like your teachers to find out even more about being in charge of different subjects. This will help them to be more involved in checking on how much progress you are making, and will help them to make your work even better than it is already.

With best wishes for your future success,

Mike Thompson

Lead inspector