

St Thomas and St Anne CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123525
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	314625
Inspection date	1 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Ted Wheatley

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	
School	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Roughan
Headteacher	Catherine Budd
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Cruckmeole Hanwood Shrewsbury SY5 8JN
Telephone number	01743 860400
Fax number	01743 860400

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a very small primary school and many pupils come from outside of the village. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and the proportion entitled to free school meals is below average. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and none is in the early stages of learning English. Attainment on entry is broadly average but a significant minority of children entering the Nursery have weak literacy and mathematical skills and poor personal, social and emotional skills. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although it varies significantly between year groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education. Standards are broadly average and rising, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and steadily getting better. Parents are pleased with the good quality of care and the fact that 'pupils always receive extra support when they need it.'

Improvements are driven by good leadership from the headteacher and governors, and by the commitment of staff. However, leadership and management are satisfactory overall because of the inexperience of some subject leaders and others in middle-management positions. The determination to ensure that the school improves is evident in the good staff morale and the sustained effort made by teachers to gain the skills they need to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Improvements are at an early stage but can already be seen in rising achievement.

Standards vary from year to year because of significant differences between year groups. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but it is good in English in Years 3 to 6, where there has been particular attention paid to developing writing and reading skills. Pupils with learning difficulties receive a good level of tailored support and consequently make good progress. However, there are pockets of underachievement, particularly by small numbers of the most able and average-ability pupils. This is because, despite recent improvements in the way assessment information is used to plan work, tasks are not always accurately matched to pupils' needs. Teaching is generally satisfactory, with lessons planned well to engage pupils' interest and good relationships that help pupils develop confidence to ask questions and discuss their ideas. The curriculum meets most pupils' needs, although it is not consistently planned to ensure that this is the case for all ability groups. A wide range of activities, visitors, visits, special focus weeks and residential trips really interests pupils.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school, attend regularly and behave well. They take on responsibilities willingly and play an active part in the school community through the children's council and class-based activities. For example, pupils look at how safe the school premises are. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and the great majority join in with one or more physical activity.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good and the school is safe and secure. Relationships are very good and pupils feel confident going to any adult for help if they need it. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving but pupils are not always sure of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision is satisfactory overall, and in the Nursery it is good. Nursery children make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills, and rapid progress in developing their personal, social and emotional skills. Children settle into school quickly, helped by the school's close links with homes and the quiet, calm, caring attitudes of all staff. Children enjoy the wide variety of interesting activities that are planned and gain confidence and new skills working with each other and adults. Teaching is good and sensitive to children's needs.

In the Reception class children make satisfactory progress overall, although this is improving as Reception and Nursery children are increasingly taught together. The school intends to increase further this arrangement from September 2008. Reception children's progress is slower

than those in the Nursery because they are often taught with Years 1 and 2 and work is not fully matched to their age or learning needs. By the time children enter Year 1, standards are broadly average, although a small proportion of pupils still have limited literacy and numeracy skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement by ensuring that work is consistently challenging and matched to the needs of all pupils.
- Make sure that pupils know how well they are doing, what their targets are and what they need to do to make further progress.

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

Standards are broadly average, although currently they are below average in Year 2. There are significant differences between years, mainly caused by the large variation in size of year groups. Achievement is satisfactory overall, taking pupils' starting points into account. Standards are rising and achievement is improving, particularly in literacy and numeracy, where the school is focusing its efforts. The school has identified and introduced effective strategies to improve the writing skills of boys and the impact of these is starting to be seen. However, the picture is not consistent. Despite improving assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress, work is sometimes too easy and some of the most able and average-ability pupils do not make the progress they are capable of.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. This is due to well-planned, sensitive support from teachers, classroom assistants and outside agencies.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school 'because the teachers and children are really kind and always have a smile on their faces.' Pupils behave well and understand the behaviour code because they played an active part in formulating the 'Golden Rules.' In lessons, pupils are mostly attentive, although attention occasionally wavers when work is too hard. Attendance is good. Pupils readily accept responsibilities. For example, some act as monitors in assembly, and others serve on the Eco Committee to look at how to save energy and recycle materials, or belong to the Children's Council. Pupils show good consideration for each other. For example, they make sure that lunch boxes are not stored near radiators. Given sound achievement overall, pupils' preparation for future life is satisfactory.

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good, and they have a very good knowledge of the traditions and beliefs of other cultures in Britain and around the world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are well planned and organised and the great majority of pupils work hard. Teachers start lessons with fast-paced activities that catch pupils' attention and help them concentrate. Teachers use what they know about pupils' progress to plan activities matched to pupils' abilities, but they sometimes do not do this accurately enough. Consequently, this slows the pace of learning for some of the most able and average-ability pupils. Nevertheless, the wide range of activities in lessons engages pupils' interest and for the most part they learn willingly and enthusiastically. Increased planned opportunities for pupils to write and speak independently are leading to improving literacy skills. Pupils with learning difficulties receive a wide range of carefully planned support which helps them learn well. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well.

Teachers mark work regularly and while mostly it tells pupils what they ought to be doing to improve their work, this is not consistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is not always planned effectively to meet the needs of the most able and average-ability pupils. Nevertheless, there are significant strengths in the range of visits, visitors and activities planned to make the curriculum relevant and interesting to pupils. For example, there have recently been theme-led weeks on African culture, being safe and healthy and mini-enterprise, all of which pupils have enthused about. The range of out-of-school activities is wide and pupils take part readily in sports, music and art activities.

The quality of information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory and although it is not used enough in other subjects, provision is rapidly improving. There is some very good practice, for example, in pupils creating their own web pages.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents appreciate the good quality of care that the school provides which allows their children to feel happy, secure and ready to learn. The school's safeguarding procedures are good. Bullying is extremely rare but the school's procedures to deal with it are very good. Pupils who need extra help are identified early in their time at school and links with families and external agencies such as the educational psychology and behaviour support services are used well to support pupils where necessary.

The monitoring of pupils' progress and academic guidance is satisfactory, new procedures having been introduced recently. It is too early for the system to be fully effective and although pupils have targets, they are not always sure about them or what they have to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides effective leadership. Her direction for the school's improvement, based on her accurate recognition of the school's strengths and weaknesses, is good. Other staff, some relatively new to the profession, do not have as much leadership and management experience, but they are rapidly gaining the skills they need to carry out their roles effectively. The headteacher provides a high level of support, training and encouragement to help staff in their professional development, and the impact of this is starting to be seen in improvement planning and rising standards. Improvements are at early stages, but the issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with and the capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

The governors supported the school well during a period of having no permanent headteacher. They carefully analysed the school's needs and appointed the headteacher to deal with them, which with their support she is doing. Their targets are ambitious and aimed at steady improvement, in line with the headteacher's aims. The governors provide a good level of challenge for the headteacher and support her and staff effectively.

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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?	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	3

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	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 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	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?	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?	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	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 November 2007

Dear Pupils

St Thomas and St Anne's Church of England Primary School, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY5 8JN

You helped make our day in your school very enjoyable. We spoke to many of you in lessons, around school and in a meeting. You were very helpful and gave us a good idea of how much you enjoy school and what you think of it. Thank you.

These are the main things we found out about your school:

- You are at a satisfactory and fast-improving school.
- Your progress is satisfactory and the standards you reach are about average but going up; they are already above average in English.
- Those of you in the Nursery make good progress because teaching is good.
- The headteacher, governors and other staff work hard to make sure you do well at school.
- Teaching is satisfactory and there is a very wide range of activities, visits and visitors that really interest you and make school enjoyable.
- You behave well and enjoy school, and your attendance is good.
- You have a very good understanding about healthy living. You eat well and most of you take part in physical activities.

To improve things further, we have asked the school to:

- Make sure that work is always hard enough so that you make good progress.
- Always tell you how well you are doing, what your targets are and what you need to do to reach them.

With best wishes

T Wheatley Lead inspector



3 November 2007

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T Wheatley
Lead inspector