

St Luke's Church of England Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115082
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326123
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Walker

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	304
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Julian Wyncoll
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Enguell
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Church Road Tiptree Colchester Essex CO5 0SU

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2009
Inspection number	326123

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average mixed primary school. The school is situated in the village of Tiptree and serves both pupils from the local vicinity as well as many who come from outside the immediate catchment area. Although the majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, there are a small number from minority-ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average although the percentage of pupils with a statement of special needs is above average. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) education is provided in the Reception classes. The school has been awarded the Investors in People, Activemark and National Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school provides a good standard of education. The personal development and well-being of the pupils is outstanding. The Christian foundation of the school ensures that all individuals are valued and there is a real emphasis on both the personal and academic development of the pupils. There is a very clear commitment to the inclusion of all children in the school including the gifted and talented as well as those who find learning hard. The headteacher provides positive and progressive leadership that enables all staff to play an important part in the success of the school. Parents praise the positive management of the school and the dedication of the teachers in comments such as, 'I have nothing but praise for the school because the staff really care for the children. The school provides an extremely welcoming and friendly atmosphere. Our children are very happy at the school and certainly enjoy all aspects of their learning'.

Pupils make good progress considering that they enter the school with skills and knowledge that are below national expectations. The vast majority consistently achieve standards that are average by the time they leave the school. The emphasis on reading and writing across the school has supported the recent improvements in Year 6 standards in English which are now above the national average. The school effectively uses assessment information across all classes to track individual pupils' progress. There are effective systems in place to provide good quality intervention support for pupils who require additional help with their work. However, the monitoring of pupils' progress is not sufficiently rigorous so that teachers are held fully accountable for the progress of their pupils.

The personal development of the pupils is outstanding and reflects the high standards of pastoral care, guidance and support in the school. Pupils feel that they are an important part of the community and are able to succeed in their learning. The school runs very smoothly and calmly on a day-to-day basis leading to a very positive atmosphere in the buildings. Parental comments include, 'I authentically regard the school as one huge extended family. Everybody looks after each other both inside and outside the school'. Pupils from all backgrounds settle quickly into the school and all pupils show considerable respect for other cultures and customs. Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well within a supportive and active learning atmosphere. Pupils enjoy the lessons and are eager to make progress. The school has been active in providing a good curriculum that is creative and interesting for the pupils. There is a greater emphasis on developing skills across all subjects and encouraging the pupils to take greater responsibility for their learning. This is beginning to have an impact on raising standards across the school particularly in literacy related subjects.

Excellent partnerships exist with external support services that greatly enhance the pastoral support for the pupils. There are valuable links with other schools and commercial partners such as the local preserve company. The school is also an integral part of the parish of St Luke's Church and makes a positive contribution to community cohesion. The leadership and management is good overall and the headteacher is well supported by the senior leadership team and governors. Whilst the school has addressed all issues raised in the previous inspection, the process of self-evaluation is not systematic enough at the moment to effectively inform whole school priorities and improvement planning. The effective leadership of the headteacher, senior leadership team and governors plus the commitment and dedication of the staff indicate that this school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to their education because of the well-planned provision. They achieve well in all areas of learning and make good progress although standards are below the expected goals overall by the time they leave the Reception year. Children do best in their personal, social and emotional skills and in physical development to reach average standards. Staff in the Reception classes provide a secure and interesting environment to ensure children's welfare. As a result, the majority of children quickly learn to help each other, are engaged in lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. Structured activities have a significant impact on personal development as well as encouraging number and language skills and understanding. Most children are able to explain what they are doing and why. Behaviour is good overall although a number of children take longer to adjust to the school's expectations. Children are beginning to develop their independence and take responsibility for small tasks such as collecting the fruit for snack. Teachers keep detailed records of the skills of children and use this information to match the activities well to the full range of children's needs. A good range of indoor resources supports the learning of the children. The school recognises that the outdoor area is not fully developed to bring it in line with the indoor environment. The EYFS is well led and the good teaching and effective support staff work well as a team. There is regular liaison with parents who speak highly of the care and support for their children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the checking of pupils' progress is sufficiently rigorous and teachers are held more accountable for the progress of their pupils.
- Ensure that the process of self-evaluation is more accurate and systematic so that it informs more directly whole school priorities in the school improvement plan.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and most pupils leave the school with average attainment. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress to reach broadly average standards in reading and slightly below average in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. The school has been very successful in improving the standards of reading overall in Key Stage 1. From Year 3 to 6, pupils make good progress so that standards reached in national tests by Year 6 are above average in English and broadly average in mathematics and science. Assessment information shows that pupils have consistently made good progress over the last three years. The emphasis on reading and writing has particularly raised performance in English. Evidence from pupils' work demonstrates all classes are making good progress during the current year. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make equally good progress. Additional support for pupils who find learning difficult ensures that they make good progress. Pupils make particularly good progress in art where standards are above the national expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils have excellent personal qualities because there is an extremely positive atmosphere in the school. They are very friendly, confident and supportive of each other and behave well in lessons and around the school. Their attendance is above average and they thoroughly enjoy

coming to school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils develop a clear sense of right and wrong, and have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy, both through eating sensibly and taking exercise. They regularly raise considerable amounts of money for charities and Year 6 pupils support a child in Ethiopia. Older pupils embrace the varied opportunities to take responsibility in the school such as play leaders, 'mini-midday supervisors' and 'squabble busters'. They make a considerable contribution to the local community by entertaining the elderly in the school, carol singing in the village centre and taking part in the Tiptree Festival. The school council takes an active part in school improvements such as supporting the development of the pond in the garden area. Pupils' basic skills and ability to work with others are developing well. As a result, they are effectively prepared for their secondary education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers are successful in promoting an enthusiasm for learning. Good standards of behaviour and high levels of concentration support pupils' progress well. Effective teaching is characterised by high expectations and the clever use of questioning which challenges the pupils. Most lessons proceed at a brisk pace, which sustains their interest. Support staff provide valuable help for pupils who find learning difficult. Teachers are increasingly encouraging pupils to question, explore, take initiative and assess their own learning. However, such good teaching is not fully consistent across the school and a small proportion of lessons lack sufficient pace and the focus is more on teaching than on learning. As a result, pupils lose their concentration so that their progress falters. Opportunities are not always given for them to share and discuss ideas. There is some high quality marking of pupils' work particularly using written comments to highlight the next steps in learning although this is not consistent across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a good range of opportunities that make learning fun. Teachers work hard to ensure meaningful links between subjects and they develop interesting and exciting themes for the whole school such as the Carnival and Arts weeks. There are many opportunities for pupils to practise their key skills in literacy across the different subject areas. All pupils now take a lesson in philosophy which greatly supports their thinking skills and encourages them to take more responsibility for their own learning. The more creative curriculum has supported the raising in standards in reading and writing across the school in all literacy based subjects. The school is rightly putting in place strategies to accelerate the rate of progress in mathematics. A very good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities greatly supports the pupils' high levels of enjoyment and good progress. The curriculum is fully accessible to all pupils including those with physical disabilities who have wheelchair access to the classrooms. Exceptionally high quality display work ensures that classrooms and corridors provide a stimulating learning environment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's pastoral care is excellent and reflected in pupils' outstanding personal development. The school is recommended by outside agencies as a highly inclusive school and evidence shows this to be the case. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who might otherwise have attended a special provision are welcomed into the school with positive results. Procedures for child protection and measures to ensure the health and safety of pupils meet statutory requirements. There are very good links with outside agencies and children who are at risk are very well supported. Skilled teaching assistants give effective support to individuals and groups of pupils who need extra support with their work. The 'Lavender Room' is used well to provide effective counselling support for a range of pupils. Academic care, guidance and support are good, leading to good progress amongst pupils. The 'target' walls in each classroom help pupils to understand what they need to do in order to improve in English and mathematics. The school collects assessment data regularly and tracks the progress of all pupils. However, the checks on pupils' progress are not sufficiently rigorous to raise achievement further and teachers are not fully accountable for their pupils' progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides forward-looking and supportive leadership of this successful school. She is constantly encouraging and enabling all staff to work together as a team, take ownership of the developments in the school and consider their own professional development. Parents, teachers and governors greatly respect and share her focused approach to promoting inclusion, enjoyment in learning, high levels of care and good attainment for all pupils. The deputy headteacher plays a crucial part in supporting the improvements across the school. Subject leaders are developing their roles so that they are more engaged in the monitoring of standards and teaching in their subject areas. The large number of support staff are highly valued and well integrated into the school. Governors are increasingly well informed about the school's progress so that they are able to undertake more confidently their monitoring role. The innovative team structure encourages governors, teachers and support staff to be more fully involved in the decision making so that there is a real ownership of policies and practices in the school. However, the school's self-evaluation process is not sufficiently accurate or systematic so that it informs whole-school priorities in the school improvement plan.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

30 January 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Luke's Church of England Controlled Primary School, Tiptree, CO5 0SU

Thank you for making us so welcome and talking to us during the inspection. We particularly enjoyed seeing you all in assembly and hearing you sing 'Song of Blessing'. Your school is providing a good standard of education and your personal development is outstanding. The school runs very smoothly and calmly on a day-to-day basis. We know that your parents and carers are very pleased with the standards in the school. There are many positive things about your school.

- You try hard in lessons and make good progress.
- Standards in English and art are above national expectations.
- You really enjoy coming to school, are proud of your school and look very smart in your uniform.
- You demonstrate excellent personal qualities, behave well, are really good at taking care of one another and warmly welcome all children to your school.
- The curriculum is very interesting and has a wide range of extra activities.
- The headteacher is very good and leads your school really well.
- The staff look after you well so that you feel happy, safe and secure.
- Your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting for you.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do the following things to make your school even better:

- ensure that the teachers keep a very close eye on your progress so that they can put in extra support when you find the work difficult
- ensure that the school regularly checks how it is doing and then uses this information to plan just how to improve.

We hope that you will continue to work hard and enjoy learning. We wish you every success in your future education at St Luke's Primary School.

With very best wishes,

Stephen Walker

Lead inspector