

Kelvedon St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115109
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	326125
Inspection date	25 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Alison Pangbourne

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	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	410
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	Mrs Tina Wilson
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Daniells / Mr Steve Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Docwra Road Kelvedon Colchester Essex CO5 9DS

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	25 February 2009
Inspection number	326125

Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- What is the school doing to improve progress in writing, particularly for higher attainers?
- How effective is the school's approach to assessment in helping teachers to understand the next steps in children's learning?
- Is the new monitoring and observation system impacting positively on progress?

They gathered evidence from observing work in classrooms, scrutinising school documentation, records of pupils' achievement and progress, as well as discussions with senior leaders, governors and pupils.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average and four pupils have a statement of special educational needs. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties or autism. When children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage their attainment is a little below what is expected for their age, although this is not the case for all children. The school has been led by two acting co-headteachers since the beginning of this school year. It has gained National Healthy School status and the Active Mark, recognising its provision for physical activity.

There is a privately managed pre-school group, and before- and after-school care, the 'ABC' club, on the site which was inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Parents are very positive about it. One wrote, 'This is a lovely school with a really dedicated staff. My children's teachers are always approachable and supportive.' The pupils agree, saying, 'There's always a buzz around the school. If you are new, you are welcomed straight away.'

The school is currently in a period of significant change. Pending the appointment of a new headteacher, the former assistant headteachers are successfully leading the school by sharing, equally, the responsibilities of headship as co-headteachers. They are supported by an outstanding governing body, who have worked tirelessly to ensure that the school moves forward during this unsettled time. Leadership and management are good. Several new initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact on the school's work. For example, teachers are very pleased with the way that they are being helped to improve further the quality of their teaching which is good. The whole staff work together on how to improve an aspect of teaching; they then assess their own lessons and, subsequently, the co-headteachers check for success with brief, but regular, observations of teaching and learning. They are already seeing an increase in good and outstanding features in lessons and improving progress. Plans show that this process will eventually be developed to include subject leaders in monitoring the quality of teaching in their subjects to give them a better understanding of what could be improved further. New ways of assessing pupils' progress have also been introduced. A whole-school approach to assessing the foundation subjects ensures that teachers are clearer in what pupils know and what they need to learn next. The pupils have an excellent understanding of what they learn, because they are regularly asked to assess their own understanding in lessons.

Pupils' achievement is good from what, for many, is a low starting point when they join the school. In 2008, teacher assessments show that standards were above average in reading and mathematics and well-above average in writing by the end of Year 2. Assessments for previous years show that standards have been significantly above average for some time. Unvalidated test results for 2008 show that standards were above average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Here too, apart from a dip in 2006, standards have been significantly above average recently. These pupils made good progress from their starting points in reading, mathematics and science and satisfactory progress in writing. Standards in writing were not as high as those in reading and not all pupils who exceeded the expected level for writing when they were in Year 2 exceeded the expected level in Year 6. The school has identified this weakness and measures are in place to address it, including a range of extra programmes led by talented support staff and a stronger focus on encouraging pupils to write with a more clearly defined purpose. Pupils who find it harder to develop literacy and numeracy skills make good progress and achieve well.

The school fully lives up to its Code of Conduct: 'Be safe, be kind, be responsible', and the school's values underpin everything that happens in school, resulting in outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Every pupil is important and receives outstanding pastoral support and academic guidance. All safeguarding requirements are complied with. The progress of individual pupils is closely assessed and extra help is given to any who are falling behind. Pupils themselves contribute to their good progress. They take the school's values to heart and behave extremely responsibly, showing outstanding personal development. They delight in the many opportunities they have to contribute to the smooth running of the school. For example, the school council exchange emails with one of the co-headteachers to ensure

that actions from their meetings are noted and that everyone in the school community knows what is happening. The Hotstuff magazine gives older pupils the experience of working as a committee and compiling and editing contributions from across the school.

Other factors help pupils to do well. Good teaching challenges them to learn and the way that teachers encourage them to explain their thinking and to understand what they are learning and why, contributes to the pupils' good progress. The outstanding curriculum helps to make learning enjoyable because the themes studied are well chosen to motivate them. For example, in Year 4, the topic 'Magic and Mayhem' gives many opportunities to learn a range of skills across the curriculum in an imaginative and interesting way. Many tasks are closely related to real life and, consequently, pupils show a very high commitment to their work, saying that their lessons are 'brilliant'. They also thoroughly enjoy the rich range of extra-curricular activities, for example, a multitude of sports and the many opportunities to make music. The school promotes community cohesion extremely effectively by actively fostering a very strong sense of community, both within the school and outside it. Pupils develop an excellent understanding of the local and global communities through their work in various subjects, the many visits they make and the wide range of visitors who share their knowledge and skills. Pupils also have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle.

There is a tangible sense of seeking continual improvement throughout the school and all staff share in this view. All work as a committed team to make sure that the school does not suffer during this period of uncertainty. Its self-evaluation is accurate and the good progress made since the previous inspection shows that it has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Parents recognise the flying start that their children make. Many comment on how happy their children are to come to school. One wrote, 'I am always hearing about the fun my child has at school, which encourages him to want to learn more.' The children are accommodated in two classes and excellent leadership ensures that they enjoy the same interesting, very well planned curriculum in both. Thorough assessments are undertaken, and support staff play an important part in the children's learning. All staff are excellent role models. Children make outstanding progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage from what, for many, is a low starting point. By the time they transfer to Year 1, many have exceeded the early learning goals set for them nationally.

Children do exceptionally well because the teaching is of very high quality and children's progress is closely tracked to make sure they do as well as they can. Tasks are planned to be exciting and matched to the children's needs and interests. Every opportunity for learning is taken, often linked to a theme. For example, children weighed, measured and compared African animals, threaded sequences of beads for the African corner and painted in warm colours to reflect the hot climate. Children's behaviour is excellent because adults make their expectations clear. Every child is cared for exceptionally well and all welfare requirements are met. The children thrive in a secure, relaxed environment where they are encouraged to develop their skills through teacher-led and child-initiated activities, both indoors and outdoors.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by encouraging pupils to write for a purpose so that more reach higher national test levels in Year 6.

- Use the recent initiatives to improve the monitoring of teaching and learning to give subject leaders a better understanding of quality in order to make practice even more effective.

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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?	2
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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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/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	1
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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	1
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**

26 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Kelvedon St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Kelvedon, CO5 9DS

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. We would like to tell you what we found out.

You told us that you love coming to school because of all the interesting things that you have to do. We agree with you. We thought that some of the titles of your themes give you the chance to learn lots of subjects in an exciting way. For example, I expect that some of you enjoyed making magic potions in science and wizard cloaks in design and technology as part of your 'Magic and Mayhem' topic. We were impressed with the way that you understand your 'values for life' and how you try to make sure that you are safe, kind and responsible at all times. All the adults look after you extremely well. Your behaviour is excellent and we were pleased to hear that no one in your school would ever hurt anyone. You make good progress and do better work than most children of your age. This is because teachers make learning fun and help you to enjoy your lessons. We liked the way that your tasks are often linked to something you know about, such as planning a TV schedule. We thought that you have lots of opportunities to help your school become an even better place through the school council and the school magazine. We were pleased to see that you chose healthy food at lunchtime and that you know how to keep safe. I expect you know that Mr Taylor and Mrs Daniells are leading your school together until a new headteacher is appointed. They are doing a good job and have introduced lots of new things to keep your school improving. Your families know that you go to a good school.

We have asked Mr Taylor, Mrs Daniells and the teachers to help more of you in Year 6 to do better in writing, particularly those of you who find it quite easy to write well. You can help by continuing to try as hard as you can. We have also asked them to carry on with their new system to watch each other teach so that subject leaders can learn more about teaching in their subjects to improve even more.

We hope you carry on enjoying your time at Kelvedon St Mary's Primary School and do well in your next school.

Best wishes

Alison Pangbourne

Lead inspector