

Southam St James (Voluntary Aided) CofE Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 125727 |
| Local Authority | Warwickshire |
| Inspection number | 328385 |
| Inspection dates | 2–3 March 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Angela Kirk |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 197 |
| 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 | Katherine Watson |
| Headteacher | Hilary Wankling |
| Date of previous school inspection | 28 November 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Tollgate Road Southam CV47 1EE |
| Telephone number | 01926 812127 |
| Fax number | 01926 815438 |

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| Age group | 4–11 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size. Pupils are predominantly from White British backgrounds, with few from minority ethnic groups. The overall proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly moderate learning difficulties, is similar to that found in most schools although the proportion varies between different year groups. There have been several changes of leadership since the last inspection. The current headteacher was appointed in January 2009. There is an independently managed nursery and before and after-school clubs on the same site as the school. This provision was inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory school provides its pupils with a friendly and caring environment in which to learn. Most parents are very supportive of the school and are pleased with the education it provides. 'St James is a caring school where all children are encouraged to grow in confidence and sensitivity to each other' was a typical example of their views. Long-term staff absences and the several changes of leadership since the last inspection have taken their toll, and standards have fallen as a result. They are now broadly average.

Children make a satisfactory start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which has improved in recent months. Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and social development is good. This is because the curriculum promotes personal development well and the school provides good pastoral care. Pupils' enjoyment of school is clear and the number who attend regularly is high, resulting in the school achieving 'the best attended primary school in Warwickshire' for 2006–07. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and are keen to do well. Behaviour is good and pupils work hard in class. Throughout the school, pupils take responsibility for a wide range of activities and tasks. Pupils' appreciation of healthy living and their involvement in activities to encourage them to develop workplace skills are good.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory across the school as a whole, but there are inconsistencies from class to class. The main reason for this is that, in some classes, teachers do not ensure that activities focus sufficiently on learning intentions and often do not time sections of lessons carefully enough. As a result of these differences in quality, pupils' progress is inconsistent. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. The curriculum is satisfactory, but has many good features, for example in its continuity and wide range of enrichment activities. Close attention is paid to pupils' care and welfare, but the quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory because of shortcomings in the academic guidance provided. Pupils do not have targets to help them to understand the specific areas of their learning that they need to improve. This limits the effectiveness of teachers' otherwise often helpful marking.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The current headteacher provides clear direction and is ably supported by the senior management team and governors. Supported by the local authority, realistic self-evaluation has identified strengths and weaknesses in provision and support has been put in place. Since the last inspection, the governors have become far more knowledgeable about the role they need to play in school self-evaluation. Past underachievement, especially in Key Stage 1, has been acknowledged. A new tracking and assessment system has recently been established with the aim of more quickly identifying underachievement. Staff are starting to be more accountable for the progress of their pupils. Although improvement since the last inspection has been inadequate, the improvements in the last academic year have demonstrated that the capacity to improve further is now satisfactory. The school is closely involved with the local community, especially the local churches, and makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children settle quickly into school because of good induction procedures and a warm, welcoming atmosphere. Children start school with skills typical for their ages. They make steady progress and start Year 1 with expected standards for their age in terms of both their academic and

personal development. Children engage productively in a range of activities, including those led by the teacher and those initiated by the children themselves. The current headteacher has been instrumental in ensuring that outdoor learning now forms an integrated part of lessons, with carefully planned activities to promote all areas of learning. Assessment information is not used enough to ensure that all children make as much progress as they could, especially in their early writing skills. Although parents are made welcome and there is a good atmosphere, opportunities are missed to more fully involve parents in their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress by ensuring that activities in all lessons are appropriately paced and carefully linked to the learning intentions.
- Monitor pupils' progress more thoroughly to ensure that timely support is put in place for pupils who are at risk of falling behind.
- Use information from the analysis of data to set pupils learning targets and link these to teachers' marking.

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 across the school. This represents satisfactory achievement in relation to pupils' generally average starting points. Standards have fallen from the previously above average standards seen at the end of Year 6 because pupils' progress has been uneven. In the national tests in 2008, standards in Year 2 were below average because of the larger than usual number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the class. Too few pupils achieved the higher levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities generally make similar progress to their peers. There is some underachievement of boys in some classes which the school is tackling with changes, for example, to the curriculum.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They like their teachers and this is reflected in their good attendance. Pupils' strong spiritual and moral development reflects the school's nature. For example, pupils were keen to discuss their school prayer wall with inspectors. However, pupils' appreciation of religious and cultural diversity is not as strong. Pupils' good understanding of a healthy lifestyle is evident in their knowledge of healthy food and exercise. Pupils respect one another and have good relationships with each other and with their teachers. Behaviour is good in lessons and at play. Pupils enjoy school and particularly like taking responsibility for school activities such as running the school stationery shop, supporting younger pupils at lunchtime and in their reading and answering the school telephone at lunchtimes. Although pupils generally adopt safe practices in school, they do not always make sensible choices when using and putting away equipment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships between adults and pupils are good and strategies to maintain good attention and behaviour are well established in all classes. Planning is good, but the tasks that pupils are set do not always help them to make as much progress as they could when they are not sufficiently linked with the learning objective for the lesson. Often, too long is spent on main teaching sessions which overrun and do not allow sufficient time for independent learning. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not ensure that organisation of the pupils promotes the best learning environment. Work is generally well matched to pupils' different capabilities and support from teaching assistants is appropriately directed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The planned curriculum includes many positive features but, too often, activities in lessons do not realise the full potential of all that is planned for. When, for example, teachers' lesson introductions go on for too long, time for some activities is curtailed and this has an impact on the progress that pupils make. Nevertheless, the continuity between year groups is generally good and recent improvements in information and communication technology and the introduction of French have begun to enhance the curriculum. Extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities are good. Pupils talk very enthusiastically of visits and residential experiences. For example, pupils enjoyed the learning that took place at the Frontier Centre and were looking forward to a planned trip to York.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Relationships between staff and pupils are good so pupils feel confident to share their problems and to seek help. Care is good and staff treat pupils well and act as good role models. All aspects of safeguarding meet requirements and appropriate policies are adhered to. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils do not have targets that focus them on how best to improve their work. Marking provides some helpful feedback to pupils but, in the absence of targets, it does not do enough to move pupils' learning on.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The current headteacher is well supported by the senior management team. This team is working hard to lead the school forward together, drawing well on the support of the local authority. The school has a realistic view of the quality of education it currently provides. As a result, the priorities for development are now the right ones to move the school forward. Governors are supportive of the school and are becoming clearer about what needs to be done to drive up standards and to help them hold the school more effectively to account for what it achieves. Parents are generally very supportive of the school, but a small minority highlighted concerns about previous long-term absences of teachers which they felt had negatively impacted on the progress of their children. A system for tracking pupils' progress has been put in place and it

has enabled teachers and leaders to highlight areas of weakness. Strategies have been put into place to address these, for example, earlier identification of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and materials to support pupils' writing. Community cohesion is satisfactory. Although the school engages well in a range of community activities and enjoys good relationships with local churches and pre-school providers, pupils do not have enough opportunities to broaden their awareness of the European and global dimensions to enable them to understand the lives of others and appreciate diversity.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 | No |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being? | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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|---|---|
| How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS? | 3 |
| How well do children in the EYFS achieve? | 3 |
| How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS? | 3 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop? | 3 |
| How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 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/or disabilities make progress | 3 |

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

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|---|---|
| How good are 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 | 3 |
| The extent to which 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 | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|--|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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? | 3 |

Leadership and management

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|--|-----|
| 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 eliminated | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 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 | 3 |
| 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**

4 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Southam St James (VA) C of E Primary School, Warwickshire, CV47 1EE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and watching you at work. Southam St James is a satisfactory school. The inspectors were pleased by your good behaviour, how well you play together and by your good attitudes. Staff take good care of you and the school has a warm and friendly atmosphere. We were impressed with how many of you take on responsible roles in school, such as answering the school telephone at lunchtime. Older pupils help younger ones at lunchtime, with their reading, and with business initiatives such as running the school stationery shop and raising money for charity.

Mrs Wankling and all the staff want you to do as well as possible and we have been talking about ways of helping you to do this. We have asked staff to make sure that they time the sections of their lessons carefully and match the activities you are set more closely to the learning objectives that you have at the start of each lesson. We have also asked them to give you targets for English and mathematics, so that you know exactly what you need to do to improve in your work. You can help by always listening very carefully to what your teachers are saying, and if you are unclear about how you are going to achieve the lesson objectives, ask your teacher! We would like your teachers to refer to these targets in their marking so that you always know exactly how well you are doing.

We also want the school to look at how well you learn in each class so that good ideas are shared right throughout the school. Teachers have been asked to keep a careful record of how well you are doing with your learning, so that if there is anything that you do not understand or find difficult, they can help you to catch up.

Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Angela Kirk

Lead inspector