

All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124776
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	340652
Inspection dates	10–11 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	87
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs J Wright
Headteacher	Mr R Denny
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations and notes of governors' meetings, pupils' work and other assessment information. Inspectors scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 49 parents or carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- reasons for the substantial rise in standards in 2009 and measures to improve writing
- impact of the creative curriculum on pupils' learning
- effectiveness of leaders and governors in bringing about lasting improvement as a result of monitoring activity.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average size school. It has its Early Years Foundation Stage provision in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. All pupils on roll are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. These pupils mainly have moderate learning difficulties. The school has gained Healthy Schools status, the Gold Artsmark and the Active Mark and Silver Eco School awards.

The school has been successful in becoming a 'Change School' and is involved in a two year project with Creative Partnerships focusing on curriculum development and innovation.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

All Saints is an outstanding school. Pupils thrive in its safe and caring environment. Excellence in the creative and performing arts is a particular feature of the school's work, with high quality displays of pupils' artwork exhibited around the school. Pupils achieve well and attain standards that are above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because of the high quality support they receive. Children do particularly well at the start of their school career in the Early years Foundation Stage and make outstanding progress in Year 6. Progress is generally good in Years 2 to 5, although there is some variation in how well pupils perform in mathematics. This is because they do not always use and apply their knowledge and understanding well enough in practical ways, something the school has identified as a priority for development.

A parent commented, 'The school has a happy and nurturing atmosphere but also has high expectations of children's behaviour and work.' Teaching is consistently good. Work is usually challenging for pupils, and the teaching makes learning interesting and exciting. Pupils are clear about their targets for improvement, but there is some variation in how effectively the marking of their work sets out the next steps in their learning. The outstanding curriculum links subjects together extremely effectively, with many opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in a variety of ways. During the inspection, a whole school focus on a book about a hurricane, as part of Book Week, created a whirlwind of activity that galvanised and excited pupils.

Pupils have an outstanding understanding of how to stay safe and remark on how secure they feel in school. They take part in cycling proficiency and learn about common hazards, as well as road safety. Their behaviour is outstanding both inside and outside school, as they are caring and considerate towards one another. A pupil said, 'We make friends quickly when new children come into our school.' Pupils take plenty of exercise in a range of sports and benefit from using the school's own open-air swimming school. Pupils make an outstanding contribution both to the school and to the wider community through their willingness to take on responsibilities and through showing initiative.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding, as all pupils are known and valued as individuals, and support is tailored to their particular needs. Staff and pupils alike reflect the school's deeply held Christian values that are evident in its culture of mutual respect. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the pastoral care of all pupils is outstanding.

The school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement as a result of the

significant improvement since its last inspection, with a particularly strong rise in standards in 2009. The headteacher has developed excellent systems to track pupils' progress so that all staff are fully aware of how well everybody is doing. The school's evaluation of its work is thorough and rigorous, leading to accurate judgements and well constructed strategic plans for improvement. The deputy head's creative flair complements the headteacher's mastery of data highly effectively, which has enabled the school to consolidate and build on what it does well and gain ground rapidly in its areas for development. Governors support the work of the school well, and bring considerable experience and expertise to bear. They recognise the need to record the outcomes of their monitoring more systematically.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make achievement outstanding by:
 - developing further opportunities for all pupils to use and apply their knowledge and understanding of mathematics through problem-solving
 - consistently marking pupils' work to show how they can improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and are very enthusiastic about finding out new things. They attempt new artistic techniques with gusto, as when they made body casts in creating the now renowned 'Laxfield Angels', life-size sculptures of paper and acrylic that have been exhibited at Bury St Edmunds cathedral. They have very positive attitudes, and work closely together in teams, enjoying one another's company. Looked after children make good progress and integrate very well into the life of the school. Pupils are able to talk articulately about their learning, as when pupils explained the inspiration for their hurricane poems. Poetry is a great strength of the school. One poem on display in Year 6 began:

'I will put in my box:

The breath of a dolphin coming up from the silver sea

The sparkle of a unicorn's eye on a midsummer's night ...'

Pupils' achieve well from their starting points and attain standards that are above average overall. Year 6 pupils reached high standards in 2009 because of excellent teaching and a particular focus on improving writing, with more opportunities to write at length. Standards in ICT are high as pupils produce work that combines text and pictures effortlessly, such as booklets Year 4 pupils published on evacuees. Standards in mathematics, while above average overall, vary between year groups, as not all pupils have sufficient opportunities to use and apply what they know and understand in a range of different contexts.

Pupils have an outstanding understanding of how to live healthily. The school council runs a healthy tuck shop and pupils produce their own vegetables in the school garden. Pupils contribute exceptionally well to the life of the school as play leaders, buddies,

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

reading partners for younger children and school councillors. Year 6 pupils have shortlisted artists who will run workshops as part of the Creative Partnerships project and are preparing to interview them. The pupils are in great demand to perform in the local area and further afield. As well as developing above average basic skills, pupils leave the school as well-rounded individuals brimming with confidence. Their attendance is consistently high, an indication of how much they enjoy school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, as they absorb the many memorable experiences school offers them. One pupil said, 'My favourite lesson is music because it enables you to sing, learn and have fun.' Pupils support one another very well and have a good understanding of a range of different faiths and cultures, particularly through the arts and music. The school's Samba Band performs with great enthusiasm!

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching has a clear objective for each lesson that is shared with pupils. Planning takes good account of pupils' interests and abilities, so that work is usually sufficiently

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

challenging. A focus on the use of questioning has resulted in pupils' learning being extended through open-ended discussion. This is accomplished more successfully at the start of lessons. Sometimes opportunities are missed at the end of sessions to review what learning has taken place. In the best lessons, the teacher and pupils go on a journey of investigation together, with imaginative links across different areas of learning and high levels of challenge. This was seen in Year 6, when the teacher used the mast of a model of a Greek ship to demonstrate a mathematical law. Pupils have targets linked to their levels of attainment and discuss these. Marking in books varies in explaining to pupils how they can improve their work.

The curriculum is exceptionally rich and diverse and rightly viewed by the local authority as a model of excellence. It is firmly underpinned by the skills pupils need to know. Staff take every opportunity to make the curriculum relevant and enjoyable for pupils. The use of art, music, drama and dance enriches and enhances pupils' experiences and contributes greatly to their enjoyment of learning and their confidence in taking on new challenges. The curriculum is accessible for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Topic work is particularly exciting. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 recreated a Roman feast that included such delicacies as 'stuffed dormice'. There is an outstanding range of visits, visitors and clubs for pupils to enjoy, including a residential visit to Derbyshire with pupils from other nearby primary schools.

A pupil said, 'I love this school because it is fun and everyone is friendly.' This was backed up by a parent's view that 'All staff are dedicated, enthusiastic and committed.' The school has a reputation for meeting pupils' needs exceptionally well, thereby ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities often reach the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Staff know the pupils very well, and go out of their way to support them. Pastoral care is excellent, and the provision of a prayer corner in the library enables pupils to reflect quietly and compose their own prayers in the prayer book. There are highly effective links with other agencies to enhance further the school's provision for its most vulnerable pupils.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's clear vision for the school has enabled progress to be rapid since the last inspection, with excellent systems in place to monitor how well pupils are doing. Leaders embed ambition and drive improvement extremely effectively. Regular reviews

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

mean that interventions are put in place promptly for those pupils whose performance needs boosting. Leaders have successfully maintained the strengths identified at the last inspection, and the analytical systems introduced by the headteacher have complemented the school's creativity very well.

Governors provide a good level of challenge, with a wealth of experience from a variety of different fields including education. They fulfil their responsibilities well and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop. They tend to give verbal rather than written feedback of their monitoring activities, so do not keep a sufficiently detailed record of progress towards meeting priorities. There are excellent partnerships with a wide range of organisations, the link with Creative Partnerships being the most recent one. These have a very positive impact on pupils' learning and on their enjoyment of school. The school promotes equality of opportunity extremely well, its sophisticated monitoring systems meaning that differences in achievement between different groups of pupils can be ironed out swiftly.

Procedures to ensure the safeguarding of pupils are rigorous and highly effective, with excellent systems in place to secure safety both of the site and when pupils go on visits. The school promotes community cohesion particularly well locally, having an outstanding appreciation of the different groups that make up its area, and reaching out in many effective ways. There are exceptionally strong links with the church and pupils sing regularly at services. A recent link has been established with a school in India to help pupils understand cultural diversity abroad, although links with a contrasting school in the United Kingdom have not been established yet. Overall the school promotes community cohesion well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception year with a wide range of skills and abilities that are often below what is typically found in literacy and numeracy. They make outstanding progress from their starting points so that most reach and many exceed the expected early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Children offer their ideas and respond to challenges with great enthusiasm. They enjoyed making a 'hurricane shelter' out of large blocks, and their interest in how a hurricane lamp worked led the teacher to devise some investigations into circuits. There are excellent relationships in the Early Years Foundation Stage between children and adults. The outstanding provision includes a wealth of rich and varied experiences. Staff know the children extremely well as a result of high quality observations and sensitivity to their needs. Teaching is outstanding and shows a deep understanding of how young children learn. Children are confident at performing in assembly and join in with songs and rhymes enthusiastically. The learning environment is safe and secure, and pupils can move freely to the well-resourced outside area to pursue their interests. Their behaviour is excellent.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed very well so that children's independence is promoted. There are highly effective partnerships with parents and links with the pre-school that feeds into the Reception class. Staff work together extremely effectively to ensure the children's safety and well-being.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Most parents support the work of the school and value the contribution it makes to their children's education. Some would like to be better informed about what is happening in school, particularly when changes are made. Some feel that having three teachers in a single week is too much in the case of one class. There is some specialist teaching in the school, which involves classes having more than one teacher, and a job-share in one class. They agree that the school excels in the arts. Inspectors support the many positive comments made by parents, and found the provision to be at least good and often outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 87 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	39	13	27	2	4	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	21	43	13	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	27	21	43	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	35	14	29	3	6	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	14	29	18	37	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	29	16	33	4	18	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	41	14	29	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	15	31	18	37	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	27	19	39	3	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	33	17	35	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	18	19	39	4	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	14	29	18	37	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	41	11	22	4	8	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of All Saints Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Laxfield, Suffolk IP13 8HD

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. Yours is an outstanding school with many areas of strength. Here are some of them:

You say you feel really safe in school and have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy.

Your behaviour is outstanding and you make a very valuable contribution to school life and in the local community.

Those pupils who find learning difficult make particularly good progress.

Your attendance is consistently high.

You excel in the performing and creative arts; your paintings and dances are superb.

The school cares for you extremely well and helps you to do your best.

The headteacher and deputy head make a strong team that has enabled the school to improve rapidly since its last inspection.

There are excellent partnerships with other organisations to enhance your learning, such as the project with Creative Partnerships.

Children in the Reception class get off to an excellent start.

While you all do well at school we want you to do even better. We have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to use your numeracy skills to solve real life problems. We have also asked them to give you more information in your books about how you could improve your work. We are sure they would value your views on how well you think you are doing.

Thank you again for helping us. Our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead Inspector

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