

# Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115066
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	311811
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Ranger

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	193
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Esme Pickford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jon Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 December 2005
<b>School address</b>	Beridge Road Halstead Essex CO9 1JH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01787 472096
<b>Fax number</b>	01787 478291

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than average but its roll is rising. It is situated near the centre of Halstead and serves a community which includes areas of social disadvantage. In recent years, the school has had a higher than average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, up to 40% in several year groups. This proportion is now falling, although there is a much higher than average number of pupils with statements of special educational need. When pupils start Reception, their attainment varies very widely but is often much lower than expected nationally. A sixth of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small number are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The headteacher joined the school in 2005, following a very unsettled period in staffing which included numerous changes of headteacher. Soon after his appointment, the school was inspected and judged to be a good school, no longer in need of special measures to raise standards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Holy Trinity is a good school. The dedicated staff have continued to build on the improvements identified by the previous inspection. The school is attracting new pupils and this has resulted in an additional Reception class being opened this year. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about how much the school has improved and how greatly their children enjoy attending. One summarised the views of many when she wrote, 'A lot of hard work has gone into developing and changing this school and it shows.' The most dramatic changes have led to the eradication of poor behaviour and the establishment of pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. As soon as he joined the school, the headteacher set about achieving these. He has worked very successfully with the entire staff so that pupils' attitudes and behaviour are now significant strengths of the school. Attendance rose last year to be in line with national figures. Pupils have a good grasp of how to lead safe and healthy lives and they make a positive contribution to their school and the wider community. A parent was right in writing, 'The behaviour of the children is nigh on exemplary and the atmosphere around the school is one of energy and enthusiasm for learning.'

The improved climate for learning has also led to improvements in pupils' academic achievements. Pupils' progress is now consistently good. Standards in Year 6 remain low but elsewhere are satisfactory. For example, pupils in Year 5 are working at the levels expected nationally for their age group. While many boys have gone through the school with lower standards than the girls, this trend has been recognised and the school is acting to ensure that both boys and girls do equally well.

Pupils' progress is good because of effective teaching and a broad, interesting curriculum. A significant proportion of teaching is outstanding because it is pitched so precisely to the needs and interests of the pupils. Care, guidance and support are good, especially for pupils who need extra support in lessons or who face social or emotional challenges. Staff establish warm, supportive relationships with pupils and manage behaviour extremely well. Assessment is used regularly to check pupils' achievements. The school is rightly continuing to work to ensure that all assessments of individuals are as accurate as possible so that good quality information underpins plans for pupils' further development.

Leadership and management are good and strong teamwork is evident. The headteacher is highly respected by pupils and parents and staff feel well supported. A core group of governors, led well by the chair, has served the school well and new governors are being trained at present. Staff and governors evaluate strengths and weaknesses efficiently through regular monitoring of teaching and curriculum coverage. They produce clear action plans for the future, but not all of these are linked consistently enough to even more challenging targets for pupils. For example, good tracking and monitoring have improved rates of progress in English and mathematics but whole-school action to set and achieve more challenging targets in science has not been such a high priority. This is reflected in lower standards in this subject. The main written development plans do not always include clear enough ways for staff and governors to check that any initiative has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. As a result, the monitoring carried out is not fully exploited to make the pace of change even faster.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The children in Reception get a good start to their education and parents are very happy with the well-managed provision. Children make good progress and, in recent years, have reached standards broadly in line with the levels expected for the start of Year 1. Staff liaise well with parents and with pre-school organisations so that they establish individual needs from the start. Children quickly become confident and are very well behaved. Teaching is based on very good teamwork across both classes and assessment of progress is regular and accurate. Activities combine adult-led sessions with frequent opportunities for children to work independently and to make their own choices. A high priority is given to developing language and social skills. The indoor and outdoor areas are both used well, although the outdoor space is quite small and lacks any cover in bad weather.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that accurate assessments and challenging targets are used to accelerate learning further, especially to raise standards in science and promote boys' achievements.
- Improve the effectiveness of the monitoring carried out by staff and governors by ensuring that initiatives for development include clearer criteria for checking their impact on pupils' learning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Apart from the very oldest pupils, who have not fully made up for several disrupted years, pupils of all ages and from all backgrounds achieve well. Pupils who need extra help with learning are supported well in all age groups and make good progress. This includes new arrivals to this country. The best progress is most evident in the early years where pupils have had more stability and benefited from the improvements of the past few years. The results of recent assessments in Year 2 show broadly average standards in reading and below average standards in writing and mathematics. This represents good progress in relation to the pupils' starting points. Standards in Key Stage 2 mostly range from average to below. Performance in Year 6 over the past few years has reflected the school's former difficulties and standards are low again this year. A significant factor in the 2007 results for this age group was that science standards were considerably lower than English or mathematics. Analysis by the school shows that pupils had difficulty with using scientific language and applying their factual knowledge to practical situations. Teachers are working to improve these aspects.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of school and learning is outstanding. They genuinely want to learn and do well. Overall, their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, exemplified by low levels of bullying or racism. Their behaviour and maturity are sometimes exemplary, as seen in an assembly on the theme of 'When life isn't easy' and in a philosophy lesson exploring the nature of love. Pupils respect difference in other people. Those from minority ethnic backgrounds are integrated well, although pupils' knowledge of wider British cultural diversity is relatively limited. Pupils respond well to responsibility, such as through their roles as 'peer mentors' and on the school council. Their commitment to healthy lifestyles has been recognised by Healthy

School and Activemark awards. Although improvement is still needed in some basic academic skills, pupils' good social awareness and positive attitudes to learning give them a sound foundation for the next stage of education and for their later lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching is good overall and quite often outstanding. Excellent relationships and attention to pupils' personal needs lie at the heart of lessons. Lessons include humour and fun and there is plenty of smiling and laughing in classrooms. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide support and challenge as appropriate. Lessons are interesting, often exciting, with good use of resources such as the interactive whiteboards that motivate and engage pupils. Teachers mark pupils' work well, giving clear feedback on achievements and advising on the next steps. Pupils are beginning to be encouraged to reflect on their own learning so that they can identify strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers are committed to continuing to improve the ways they teach vital speaking and listening skills to all age groups.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum has continued to improve since the last inspection. Productive links are made between subjects while maintaining a good focus on basic skills. Staff are currently working to create more opportunities for pupils to apply their academic learning in creative, practical and problem-solving situations. This is part of the drive to ensure that lessons motivate boys as effectively as girls and to raise standards in science. The provision for pupils who need extra help is very well planned and organised. A more recent focus has started to address the needs of pupils with particular gifts or talents. The school continues to add to the range of clubs and visits it offers. These are very popular with pupils and greatly enjoyed.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

There are significant strengths in pastoral care. The staff know pupils and their families well. Procedures for safeguarding pupils in school are in place, for example in the vetting of staff. While pupils are supervised well at break times, a few parents express justifiable concerns about safety near the car park. Staff and governors are currently discussing how best to resolve this issue. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is well managed and the coordinator has built up impressive links with other agencies. For example, good plans are in place to smooth the transition to secondary school for more vulnerable pupils. Academic guidance is generally good. Realistic targets are set and shared with pupils. While teachers give pupils regular feedback on progress, not all pupils are clear enough about how to improve their learning and a few lack the confidence and independence to do so.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school continues to improve its leadership and management. The headteacher plays a pivotal role. He has established an atmosphere where staff and governors are keen and increasingly able to play their part in school development. The deputy head provides valuable support and stability across all aspects of school life. The chair of governors is knowledgeable and able and has been active in the school's recent successes. Efforts to reach out to parents and the local community have been wide ranging, for example in contributing to the planning of a children's centre on the site. Many parents are responding well to efforts to involve them in their children's learning but, for some, this is work in progress. Subject leaders are developing their monitoring role well. This has had a particularly good impact in English and mathematics where staff have been supported well by the local authority. All teachers are now conversant with the school's tracking systems and are becoming skilled at analysing performance data, although this is not consistently linked to target-setting arrangements. The main self-evaluation and development documents provide a good foundation for initiatives but lack some precision in how the school will check that it is continuing to raise standards. Nevertheless, staff and governors have succeeded in turning the school round over the past few years and are well placed to make further improvements.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 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	1
The attendance of learners	3
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?	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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	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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

28 February 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Holy Trinity Church of England School, Halstead CO9 1JH

This letter is to say a big thank you from Mr Parry and myself for the warm welcome you gave us on our recent visit. It was good to hear how much you enjoy your education. We were very impressed with how well you behave and get along together.

Children in the older classes told us about many ways in which your school has improved over the last few years. Many of your parents wrote to tell us the same thing. You really value your teachers and you told us how Mr Smith makes sure that everyone is safe and happy in school. We noticed how much fun and laughter there often is in your lessons. You are making good progress in learning because your teachers provide such interesting activities. You like the way the adults help you when you need it but also give you plenty of challenges. There are lots of exciting things happening in school, both in lessons and in all your clubs and visits.

The adults in your school work well as a big team to look after you all and to make sure your school keeps on getting better. They are keen for you to do better in science and we have asked them to make sure this happens. We have also asked them to check that boys and girls do equally well in all their work. You can help with these things by listening carefully to your teachers and trying hard with your work. Finally, we would like the staff and governors to make sure that when they plan any changes to your school, they check that the changes really do help you to learn even faster.

It was a great pleasure to see your school and to meet you all.

Best wishes

Mrs Helen Ranger

Lead inspector