

All Saints Church of England Primary School, Chatham

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118639
Local Authority	Medway
Inspection number	326864
Inspection date	30 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Selwyn Ward

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)	309
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	Brian Knapp
Headteacher	Gillian Hill
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Magpie Hall Road Chatham ME4 5JY
Telephone number	01634 338922
Fax number	01634 338933

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and particularly investigated:

- the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the way they are helped to develop their language and social skills
- provision for and progress in mathematics
- the impact of measures taken by school leaders to secure improvements
- the extent to which the behaviour of a few affects pupils' learning.

The inspectors met with pupils, some staff and governors. Parts of lessons were observed, parents' questionnaires and a sample of pupils' work were examined and school information, including its self-evaluation, was scrutinised. The 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 the report.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. A third of the pupils are from various minority ethnic backgrounds and around 10% are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. At more than 40%, the proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high and is mostly for speech and language or behavioural difficulties. The headteacher was appointed in April 2008.

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. It has several outstanding features, including some that have improved since the last inspection. These include pupils' personal development, which is outstanding. The pupils benefit from excellent care, guidance and support so that, as a pupil explained, 'Everyone is safe and happy.' Pupils are helped to grow in confidence and self-esteem. They greatly enjoy the many responsibilities they have within the school community, including as school councillors and, in Year 6, as 'Carers' helping to look out for younger children. By running the 'Snack Attack' healthy tuck shop, and through their enthusiastic participation in a large range of different sports, pupils not only demonstrate their excellent appreciation of the need for a healthy lifestyle but they practise what they preach. Pupils love coming to school and their attendance rates have been consistently very high. Behaviour is exemplary in almost all lessons and around the school.

Despite its many successes, academic standards at All Saints fell in the years following the last inspection. In 2006 and 2007 they were average in the Year 6 national tests and they have been below average in the Year 2 assessments. To some extent this mirrors a change in the intake of the school, with an increase in the proportion of pupils who need extra help with their learning. Even in the years when standards fell, the results represented good achievement, with pupils well prepared for the next stage of their education. However, younger pupils generally did least well in writing and, for the older pupils, their performance in mathematics was not as strong as in other subjects. Able pupils did not all do as well as they should.

School leaders have certainly been alert to this downturn. In addition to the headteacher, many of those in the leadership team are new to their roles. However, they have carefully monitored the teaching and learning in the school, and their observations have helped to ensure a diet for pupils of consistently good teaching that has increasingly pushed pupils of all abilities and different backgrounds to make equally good progress. Lessons are well planned and move at a brisk pace so that most pupils get a lot done. Standards have begun to rise so that they are now above average. From the Reception Year to the end of Year 6, pupils of all abilities achieve well. Recent initiatives to analyse the reasons for the relative underperformance in mathematics and to put in place changes to boost the achievement of pupils of all abilities, including the more able, are already showing a positive impact, with progress in mathematics now accelerating in all year groups. Coupled with the headteacher and leadership team's accurate assessment of almost every aspect of the school, this illustrates All Saints' good capacity for continued improvement.

The academic guidance given to pupils through marking and their targets gives them a very clear understanding of what they need to do to move their work on. Pupils are also involved in evaluating for themselves how well they are doing, but this is not a consistent feature of teaching. In some lessons, for example, pupils are asked to signal their understanding but neither the teacher nor any of the other adult helpers makes a note of those who have indicated they are uncertain. Teaching assistants give very good support to those pupils who need extra help with their learning when the pupils are working individually or in small groups. However, they are sometimes underutilised at the start and end of lessons when the teacher is addressing the whole class and when they could be helping to confirm that all the pupils understand what they have been taught.

It is not just in the nationally tested subjects of English, mathematics and science where pupils achieve well. They voice great enthusiasm for all the wider opportunities they have at All Saints. Pupils particularly point to the recent changes made which increasingly link subjects together so that 'they help you learn in a fun way.' They describe the learning through linked themes, where, for example, Year 3 and 4 work on The Vikings brings together history, information and communication technology, art, music and other subjects, as 'much better than doing separate subjects as we did before'. The range of clubs on offer is impressive and the pupils speak with glee about the many interesting trips they go on, and they all seem to look forward eagerly to the next one. The school's curriculum is exceptional because it is enthusing the pupils and has contributed to their outstanding personal development.

When the school was last inspected, inspectors found that pupils did not have enough opportunities to learn about other cultures. This has certainly been tackled successfully so that pupils learn a great deal about their own and the other cultures and beliefs within the school, in Britain and beyond. They are very actively involved in the wider community. Pupils have taken part in the Medway 2012 initiative in the build-up to the London Olympics. They have had the opportunity to experience sports from the perspective of disabled people, trialling wheelchair basketball. With the school they have also reached out to the wider world, through links with and generous fundraising for a school in the Indian village of Neelampoondi. These various initiatives make an excellent contribution both to pupils' thirst for knowledge and to the very harmonious relationships around the school between pupils from diverse backgrounds.

Parents express exceptionally positive views about all aspects of the school. As one, typically, put it, 'The school is everything we wished for.' Governors are very supportive, although they could do more to challenge school leaders to ensure that all do as well as they possibly could. They set as the school's aim that pupils should develop as

- Successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- Confident individuals who are able to lead safe and healthy lives
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

All Saints succeeds very well in achieving these aims.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the school with attainment that is below the level expected for their ages. They make good progress to attain average standards at the end of the Reception Year. Children are happy, well behaved and confident and enjoy coming to school. Their personal development is good because staff support them well and raise their self-esteem through praise and encouragement. Children learn to share, take turns, listen and concentrate. Assessment is used to identify any areas where their progress is slow and to plan the next steps in their learning. Children develop their skills through a wide range of role-play and practical activities, some of which link to a theme or story. Boys, however, have generally made slower progress than girls in their early writing skills and creativity. Opportunities are sometimes missed to encourage boys to develop their confidence in storytelling through the use, for example, of appropriate toys and figurines, and to provide encouragement for writing in the outdoor area. Staff work well as a collaborative team, and there is a good ratio of adults to children. There is good support for children and their parents as they move from their pre-schools. As a parent wrote of their son, 'He settled in very quickly and thoroughly enjoys school.' Another described how,

at her pre-school, her daughter 'would always cling to me and cry' but explained that 'since the first day she started at All Saints, she can't wait to get to school'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils to accelerate their own progress by ensuring all are involved in evaluating their own learning.
- Make full use of the teaching assistants during whole-class teaching to further support pupils' learning and help assess their progress.

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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	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	1
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	1
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	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**

31 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of All Saints Church of England Primary School, Chatham ME4 5JY

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. You are proud of your school, and so are your parents. So you should be. It is a good school and there is much about it that is outstanding, including the way you all behave so well and get on with each other. Your attendance is excellent. Well done! Some of you told me about the way the new learning themes are helping to make learning exciting and fun, and I could see how enthusiastic you are in lessons and when you talk about all the clubs and trips. The school takes exceptionally good care of you and the guidance you get through teachers' marking and through your targets is helping you to improve your work.

Since the last inspection, the school's test results have not been as good as in the past, but they are improving. Standards are rising and are now above average. You are making good progress thanks to consistently good teaching. We would like to see you helping yourselves to make even faster progress by being more involved in assessing your own learning. We have also asked the school to make sure that the teaching assistants, who do such a good job supporting those of you who need extra help with your learning, are given more to do at the start and end of lessons when the teacher is talking to the whole class.

All Saints is certainly a well-run school. The links it has developed with the local and wider community are especially impressive, and they are making a difference for all of you. It was fascinating to learn about some of the things you have been doing, like growing healthy food in the allotments, seeing what it is like for disabled athletes and helping the children in Neelampoondi.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully, Selwyn Ward

Lead Inspector