

Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Halstead

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115066
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	357689
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Martin Beale

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Esme Pickford
Headteacher	Jonathon Smith
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2008
School address	Beridge Road Halstead Essex CO9 1JH
Telephone number	01787 472096
Fax number	01787 478291
Email address	admin@holytrinityhalstead.com

Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	11–12 July 2011
Inspection number	357689

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011



Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 13 lessons, observing seven teachers. They held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, and members of the governing body. Informal discussions were held with parents and carers as they arrived with their children at the start of the day. Inspectors observed the school's work, and scrutinised assessment information, pupils' books, records of pupils' progress and school improvement plans. Inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 76 parents and carers, 104 pupils and 29 members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effective has action been to close the gender gap in achievement, particularly for boys in English?
- How well do teachers use assessment data and strategies to meet the needs of pupils in lessons and promote their learning effectively?
- Does marking and feedback help pupils understand how to improve their work?
- How effectively do leaders at all levels and governors provide the school with the capacity to secure sustained improvement?

Information about the school

Most pupils are from White British backgrounds in this average-sized school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average and has risen considerably in the last two years. The school has identified that a well-above-average proportion of its pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their needs are mostly associated with learning difficulties related to literacy. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class. Temporary arrangements are currently in place during the long-term absence of the headteacher; the deputy headteacher leads the school with support from the local authority. The school has recently gained recognition from Childline for its peer mentoring and has achieved National Healthy Schools status.

The school provides space for a privately run pre-school, which is inspected separately.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Holy Trinity provides a satisfactory quality of education in which pupils of all backgrounds mix together and support each other well. Their good behaviour contributes much to the harmonious and purposeful atmosphere in school. The staff team has pulled together well in the headteacher's absence to meet his vision. This teamwork is recognised by parents and carers who are very happy with the school and all that it provides for their children. This satisfaction is reflected in increasing pupil numbers for next year and their very positive responses to the inspection questionnaire.

The staff team shares a strong commitment to eliminating any barriers to learning faced by pupils. By knowing pupils as individuals and the circumstances of their families, the school pinpoints where action is needed and targets support to meet their needs, particularly for those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. This has been instrumental in improving attendance this year and reducing the incidence of persistent absence. Furthermore, the school's interaction with outside agencies is significant in supporting pupils with a statement of special educational needs so that they make progress in line with their peers.

Children have a good start to their school life in the Reception class in all aspects of their development, particularly since they have had improved access to the outside classroom. This start is not built on consistently across the rest of the school and progress is satisfactory overall, but improving. Attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6, but in spite of implementing many actions to improve the attainment of boys in English there is a significant gap throughout the school compared with girls, particularly in writing. Teaching is satisfactory, with some examples of highly effective practice when lessons are interesting and meet individual needs well. However, teachers do not always use assessment information to focus their teaching on moving the learning of all pupils forward rapidly. Although thorough, marking does not consistently give useful guidance on how to meet targets or help pupils to improve their work.

The school's sharp emphasis on promoting the pupils' well-being is shown by the way they feel exceptionally safe in school. This is a view echoed by parents and carers. Pupils are confident that any problems they encounter will be solved swiftly and fairly. The Childline award recognises their commitment to resolving problems and mentoring others. The pupils' keen participation in a wide range of sporting

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

activities and their recognition of the importance of a balanced diet demonstrate their clear understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. This is reflected in the achievement of Healthy Schools status.

The school has satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The school's progress has been maintained because the management systems established by the headteacher are secure. An effective staff team, the support of governors and guidance from the local authority have all contributed to the drive for improvement. Leaders and members of the governing body have a clear understanding of the school's qualities through accurate self-evaluation. This is based on the rigorous monitoring of performance and the careful analysis of assessment data. Priorities for action are appropriate but not always sharply focused on securing rapid improvements to the pupils' achievement, such as for boys' writing.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in English and mathematics and close the gap between the attainment of boys and girls, particularly in writing, by:
 - pitching methods and activities in lessons more closely to pupils' differing abilities
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to learn through working collaboratively and on practical activities
 - ensuring that pupils' writing is developed in a variety of styles
 - extending teachers' questioning skills
 - reducing the dependence of pupils on the support of additional adults in lessons
 - making individual targets more explicit for pupils
 - providing more effective feedback through marking on the steps pupils need to take to meet their targets
 - giving pupils greater responsibility for improving the quality of their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons, but opportunities are missed to make faster progress by matching activities more closely to pupils' needs. When learning is most effective, pupils work with interest and determination. They are attentive of their teachers and each other and concentrate for long periods. They greatly enjoy discussing their ideas with a partner, which helps to develop their speaking skills and gives them confidence to answer in front of the class. Pupils develop their writing in different subjects but not consistently in a variety of genre that grab their interest,

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

particularly of boys. In the instances where lessons are less productive, the pupils become over dependent on the support of additional adults and opportunities are missed to work collaboratively on practical tasks.

The school did not participate in the Key Stage 2 national tests in 2010.. Indications are that, although the 2011 results are below average, these represent satisfactory progress for those pupils and continue the improving trend of recent years. Apart from the gender difference in achievement, there is no variation in the progress of other groups of pupils. Through carefully targeted support from skilled and trained staff, pupils with a statement of special educational needs meet their individual targets. This enables them to have access to the content of lessons so that they make similar academic progress as others.

Pupils are proud of their school and are held in high regard within the local community. They take responsibility for their own safety, and encourage each other to act with care. They are thoughtful, considerate and get on well together. Pupils have a considerable voice in school life and take seriously positions of responsibility such as representing their classes on the school council. They hold clear views about their learning and their contribution to school improvement is much valued. Pupils are curious about their world and have a high level of respect for each other and the adults in school. They engage very positively in sporting, cultural and fundraising events. However, the school acknowledges it needs to do more to raise their awareness of the lives and experiences of people from different backgrounds.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have established a calm and purposeful learning environment in their classrooms. They explain the purpose behind each lesson and show how pupils' learning will build on from what they have done before. In the most effective lessons, explanations are interesting and engaging, and tasks undertaken are pitched at varying levels to move pupils' learning on. Skilled use is made of interactive whiteboard technology to engage the pupils' interest and stimulate their imaginations. However, whole-class teaching tends to be pitched at the middle ability and questioning is not used effectively to challenge the pupils' thinking or check their understanding. When they are clear, pupils understand their individual targets but these are not always made explicit and too little guidance is provided on the steps needed for them to be achieved.

Learning is linked creatively between subjects to add enjoyment for the pupils, such as in the topic 'They came from outer space'. These topics are carefully planned to provide continuity in the development of skills and knowledge. The school has plans to extend resources in recognition that pupils have limited opportunities to use their information and communication technology skills to support their learning. Experiences are enriched in a wide variety of ways and pupils benefit considerably from the expertise of outside providers. These include specialist sports coaches and activities in partnership with local secondary schools, for example in teaching modern foreign languages and extending the learning of gifted and talented pupils.

The pupils have great confidence in staff to advise and support them. Their progress towards their targets is carefully checked and action taken where underachievement is spotted. The school's work with families and a wide range of local health and support agencies aids the pupils' well-being and development. This includes enlisting additional expertise to train staff in the skills needed to support pupils with particular learning difficulties. Effective arrangements to help the pupils settle into school, move between classes and then on to secondary school have a considerable bearing on their confidence, self-esteem and ability to form constructive relationships.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Staff morale is high, in part because they feel trusted to continue developments to provision in spite of the headteacher’s absence. The school includes the promotion of equality of opportunity in its values and no discrimination is tolerated. Assessment data is analysed by groups and action taken has been successful in raising the achievement of girls in mathematics but not of boys in English. The team of effective middle leaders is making a considerable contribution to supporting the improved performance of their colleagues. Action to overcome weaknesses has led to improved teaching and learning and teachers are keen to work together or observe experts in order to improve their practice.

The governing body has supported the school through current leadership difficulties, but is not always sufficiently challenging of its performance, such as of boys in English. The governing body rigorously fulfils its responsibilities for safeguarding by establishing robust systems to protect pupils. Staff training in implementing procedures is regular and informative and activities provide pupils with the chance to learn about fire safety and how to keep themselves safe when using the internet.

The school works with a wide range of outside agencies which support the development of the pupils and provide teachers and leadership with new skills. The school has a very positive relationship with parents and carers, regularly seeks their views through surveys and uses the outcomes to improve provision. Parents and carers are kept well informed about school activities and their children’s development. The school has plans to develop further its promotion of community cohesion, but the evaluation of its work in this respect is not sufficiently systematic to identify what could be done next. The school has long-established links within the local community but no formal links with other localities nationally or globally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good and improving progress from starting points below those expected for their age on entry to the Reception class. They feel safe and settled because the adults know each child well and are carefully briefed and deployed to support their learning. Promoting language skills and their personal and social development are central to all of the activities provided both inside and outdoors. Adults are particularly skilled at encouraging the children’s speaking. Sessions led by adults are effective in developing basic skills such as in recognising the sounds that letters make.

Planning for each activity is based on thorough assessment so that all children are challenged by the activities provided. The environment both inside and outdoors is full of interesting resources that reflect the children’s interests. They were seen to be highly motivated by a broad range of activities linked to their current topic ‘Under the sea’. However, boys at times were seen to steer clear of activities designed to develop their writing skills. Children love taking responsibility for small tasks and take great care when handling equipment and resources. Relationships with adults are constructive and children from different backgrounds work and play happily together, showing how settled and safe they feel.

The team of adults share a common sense of purpose. They have successfully pulled together to support each other and maintain the quality of the provision during a difficult time for the school. Policies and procedures are in place so that the children are safe and well supervised at all times. Links with parents and carers are productive and their views, as well as those of the children, are taken into account when evaluating practice. Diligent observations and assessments of the children are used to identify strengths and weaknesses in provision so that practice can be adjusted to tackle any identified shortfalls.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school in response to all of the questions. Inspection evidence endorses many of their very positive views about the school, and particularly that their children are helped to adopt a safe and healthy lifestyle. However, inspectors

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

judged that teaching and learning are satisfactory rather than good. The inspection team also recognised the strengths of the partnership between home and school and how the action of staff has led to greatly improved behaviour in recent years.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Halstead 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 76 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	66	25	33	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	62	82	14	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	53	70	22	29	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	59	28	37	2	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	51	67	21	28	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	43	57	31	41	0	0	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	57	32	42	1	1	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)	45	59	27	36	0	0	1	1
The school meets my child’s particular needs	48	63	24	32	0	0	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	74	17	22	3	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	55	32	42	0	0	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	51	67	21	28	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	57	75	18	24	1	1	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



13 July 2011

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently, and for telling us your views. We know that you enjoy school and saw that you work hard. Inspectors were particularly impressed by your confident answers to their questions. We judge that Holy Trinity Primary is a satisfactory school. These are the things we liked best.

- The youngest children have a good start to their school life in Reception.
- Your teachers provide good support and guidance, particularly for those of you who find learning difficult.
- Your positive attitudes to learning contribute significantly to your satisfactory progress.
- The curriculum provides many enjoyable experiences for you through your topics, with sport being a highlight of school life.
- The school works well in partnership with others to support your learning and has formed strong links with your parents and carers.
- You develop a good understanding of how to keep yourselves fit and healthy.
- You make a valuable contribution to school life your behaviour is good.

We have asked the school to increase your progress in English and mathematics and help boys to do as well as girls, particularly in writing. To do this we are suggesting teachers continue to work to improve your learning, that they make marking more effective and that they match work more closely to your individual needs. All of you can play your part in helping the school to get even better by continuing to work hard and improving your attendance even further. Well done for showing such pride in your school and in your achievements.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**