

All Saints Church of England Primary School, Bexhill

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114491
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	311623
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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 on roll	
School	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karina Sargent
Headteacher	David Haddow
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2003
School address	All Saints Lane Sidley Bexhill-on-Sea TN39 5HA
Telephone number	01424 219083
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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

Most pupils in this average-sized school are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils are at an early stage of speaking English. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is above average and some pupils are supported through Sure Start provision before they start school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high, and an above average number of pupils hold statements of special educational need. More pupils join the school after the normal time of entry than is usual for most schools. The school has Healthy School and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

All Saints is a good school. It provides a good quality of education and excellent care and support for its pupils. Parents and carers recognise that the school looks after its pupils exceptionally well. One parent summarised the views of many in saying, 'This school is a gem in the town of Bexhill', and pupils described it as 'brilliant' and 'amazing'. Ensuring pupils' emotional well-being and security as the foundation for learning is at the heart of the school's approach and consequently, pupils' personal development is good. The excellent partnership with other schools and bodies locally through the 'Consortium' and 'Creative' Partnerships has been particularly beneficial in developing a good curriculum which opens pupils' horizons by giving them a wide range of interesting experiences. This helps pupils to enjoy school a great deal and develop positive attitudes as shown by their keen involvement in extra-curricular activities. Pupils behave well and play together harmoniously. This was shown well during the inspection when younger and older pupils took turns to play on the new activity playground area, understanding well how to use it safely. Work related to gaining Activemark and Healthy School status gives pupils a good understanding of the need for safety, exercise and healthy eating. Whilst attendance is improving, and is now just below national figures, too many parents still take children on holiday during term time.

Parents of children in the Foundation Stage (Reception class) are rightly pleased with the good start their children make. Some children do not have any formal pre-school experience and the good liaison between home and school helps all children to feel welcome and settle quickly into the class routines. Throughout the school, pupils achieve well and they make good progress because of good teaching. From their well below average starting points, standards rise to broadly average levels by the end of Year 6. Standards in the Year 2 assessments are below average, and although pupils have made good progress in reading, mathematics and science this year, they have not made the same gains in their writing. In writing, pupils lack basic skills in spelling and punctuation and do not yet write with confidence. The school has rightly identified that teachers need to give an even greater focus on improving these skills in Years 1 and 2 by planning more writing activities through the day.

Under the strong and effective leadership of the headteacher, the school is well led and managed. There are excellent systems for checking how well the school is doing and this means that senior managers are very aware that there is more to be done to raise levels of performance further, especially in writing in Years 1 and 2. The school has a good capacity for further improvement, shown in improvements already made in teaching, the curriculum and resources since the last inspection.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills that are generally well below those typical for their age, particularly in their social and emotional, and speech and language development. Adults know children very well and assess their individual needs quickly. If necessary, additional support is sought from beyond the school's resources to remove any barriers to children's learning from their earliest days in the school. Consequently, children make good progress, although many children's skills remain below average by the end of the year. The high adult to child ratio is used well to develop children's language skills, and the new phonics programme introduced this year has been particularly successful in helping children to learn to read. Children have a

rich programme of activities, such as the demonstration of Spanish dancing during the inspection. This was followed by all children thoroughly enjoying taking part in flamenco dancing themselves, helping them to acquire very positive attitudes to school. Provision is well led and managed and there is a good understanding of what could still be improved. For example, plans are in place to help children to become more confident by giving them more opportunities to reflect on what they learn and achieve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils in Years 1 and 2 more opportunities to practise and improve their writing skills.
- Raise rates of attendance by working with parents to discourage unnecessary absences from school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Results in the national tests in Year 6 are broadly in line with the national average, indicating pupils' good achievement from their below average starting point in Year 1. When they start school, pupils take time to establish their basic literacy and numeracy skills and, although they make good progress in most areas of the curriculum in Years 1 and 2, standards are below national averages at the end of Year 2. In English, writing is weaker than reading, and pupils do not apply basic spelling and punctuation skills confidently. In contrast, in Years 3 to 6, a recent focus on developing pupils' writing skills has been successful and English results have improved well, contributing to the faster rates of progress pupils have made over the last three years. This year, pupils' standards in Year 6 are a little lower than last year because there is a higher proportion of pupils with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the year group. Nevertheless, pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have made good progress from Year 2 and are meeting the challenging targets the school has set for their performance.

Throughout the school, pupils have good information and communication technology skills, largely as a result of improved equipment since the last inspection and the emphasis given to using computers as everyday tools in the classroom.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' thorough enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attitudes and behaviour that are underpinned by strong relationships. They say bullying is not a problem and that adults deal with any inappropriate behaviour quickly and fairly. As one pupil said, 'Everyone has plenty of friends at this school.' Pupils work hard in lessons and teaching assistants often give them good support to retain their concentration when they are finding work difficult.

Good gains in their spiritual, moral and social development enable pupils to appreciate the needs and achievements of others and to show care and consideration. Pupils know about other cultures and religions, and their understanding of life in a multi-cultural British society is satisfactory.

Pupils contribute well to school and local communities. They enjoy taking responsibility, for example when helping younger children in school or acting as 'Yellow Cap' playground leaders. The school council makes a good contribution to school life and, along with circle time and 'tell us' boxes, ensures pupils' views are well represented. Raising money for charities, together

with work relating to 'Fair Trade' issues, gives pupils a good understanding of wider social and economic issues and an awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. As one pupil said, 'It helps us realise how lucky we are compared with others.' Many opportunities to work in pairs and groups, together with the clear focus and good progress made in developing basic skills, gives learners a good preparation for the next stage of education and the future world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school's monitoring records show that teaching has continued to improve since the last inspection and is now consistently good. Teachers use their subject knowledge effectively so that lessons are carefully structured, with clear objectives and challenging activities that engage pupils well in their own learning. Pupils value being told what they are to learn in a lesson as this helps them to see for themselves how well they are doing. Activities are generally matched well to the needs of different groups of pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Lessons are organised and managed well. Teaching assistants work well alongside teachers to ensure that all pupils are given good support. On occasion, the high levels of involvement of an adult in some activities limit opportunities for younger pupils to try things out and solve problems for themselves. Adults help pupils to deepen their understanding very well by focused and effective questioning. A good rapport between pupils and adults makes learning fun. Sometimes, the introductions to lessons are a little long and this slows the pace and reduces pupils' active involvement in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is varied and enjoyable and is greatly enriched by interesting visits and visitors to the school. Older pupils commented on recent improvements to the curriculum with the introduction of their 'learning journeys' and how this 'makes learning easier'. They spoke enthusiastically about the activities that involved them working with others beyond the school, such as becoming 'Sidley Stringers' to publish an article in the local newspaper. This approach to making learning more relevant, by linking subjects and giving pupils real contexts to practise and improve their basic literacy and ICT skills, has a good effect on pupils' achievements. Members of staff are now rightly trying to develop this further by creating new 'journeys' which make numeracy and science the focus. The school's personal, social and health education programme makes a particularly important contribution to pupils' personal development.

Parents and carers value the way in which the school shares its curriculum plans and involves them in activities so that they understand what their children are learning. The extra-curricular activities and clubs cater well for a range of interests, and Year 6 pupils eagerly anticipate their residential visit later in the term.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school looks after its pupils exceptionally well. Parents are delighted with the high standard of pastoral care and speak of the school being akin to an extended family. As one wrote, 'This is a very caring school where staff care immensely for the child and the whole family.' Pupils feel safe and confident that adults will respond quickly to any problems. Health and safety

checks are rigorous and robust arrangements for child protection and vetting of staff are in place.

Very effective procedures help pupils settle quickly whenever they join the school and help those in Year 6 prepare for their next stage of education. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, together with most vulnerable pupils, are supported particularly well. The school has built and maintained very strong links with a wide range of agencies and services to support such pupils. Good personal support is given to pupils identified as gifted and talented.

Academic guidance is good. Effective use is made of information from regular assessments in English, mathematics, and, more recently, science to monitor and track pupils' performance and help to plan future learning. Pupils know their targets for their next stages of learning, and value having them. They say they help them to know how well they are doing and how to improve. Pupils' learning is supported further by their increasingly good involvement in evaluating their own performance and by teachers' effective marking, which gives good guidance on how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong and clear leadership. The commitment to improvement and achieving the school's aims is a shared one. Several parents wrote in praise of the headteacher's positive and visible presence and how, in their opinion, he leads the school well. With good support from senior managers and other members of staff, the headteacher has established a highly inclusive and caring school with strong teamwork and high expectations of staff and pupils.

Very effective systems are in place for monitoring all aspects of school performance and these are continually being refined. For example, senior leaders are making increasingly strong use of data to track pupils' performance. This means that the school has an excellent understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Planning for improvement is thorough and the school development plan is an effective tool to move the school forward. To support this, the school is developing the expertise of subject leaders to enable them all to play an even fuller part in managing the subjects for which they are responsible and thereby help the school make further gains.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They play a full part in strategic and financial planning and increasingly act as 'critical friends' in challenging the school to do its best.

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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 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 ¹ 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	2
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	2

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?	1

¹ 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

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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

12 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of All Saints CE Primary School, Bexhill-on-Sea TN39 5HA

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you. I promised that I would let you know what we found out. Yours is a good school and you are right to be proud of it.

- These are just some of the things we liked about the school.
- Your behaviour is good and we agree with the comment that 'everyone gets on well – like one big family'.
- You enjoy school a lot because you are secure and happy there. You know who to go to if you have any problems, and adults take good care of you.
- You are taught well and this helps you to make good progress.
- You find your targets useful in helping you to know what to do next to improve your work, and teachers also give you good guidance when they mark your work.
- You are lucky to have many clubs, and the sports activities and new activity area in the playground help you to stay fit and healthy.
- You help adults in the school plan for the future by giving them your own ideas, for example, through the school council.
- The headteacher, other members of staff and governors are leading the school well.

We agree with your teachers about the important things they are planning that should help you reach higher standards and we have asked them to:

- plan more activities to help younger pupils improve their writing;
- help pupils who sometimes miss school to attend more regularly.

You can all help by continuing to do your best. Please thank your parents and carers for returning the questionnaires. It was very helpful to hear what they think about the school. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Helen Hutchings Lead Inspector