



St Andrew's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104099
LEA Solihull
Inspection number 277071
Inspection dates 23 May 2006 to 24 May 2006
Reporting inspector Linda Rockey HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Windrush Close
School category	Voluntary aided		Solihull
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Midlands B92 8QL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 7435675
Number on roll	237	Fax number	0121 7426645
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	18 September 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Madeleine Coburn

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 11	23 May 2006 - 24 May 2006	277071

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Andrew's is an average size primary school with a nursery. It serves the local parish of St Thomas More and takes children from a wide area. The majority of children are White British and speak English as their first language. Seven per cent are from minority ethnic communities. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Few families claim free school meals. In the past two years, there have been significant staff changes in Key Stage 2.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Andrew's has a caring and welcoming atmosphere. Parents are very supportive and several wrote letters to the inspectors praising the school. One parent commented 'St Andrew's is a wonderful family of teachers, children and parents. My children have all felt safe, secure and loved.'

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. The school judges itself to be good but this is a more positive view than inspection evidence reveals. Although children reach above average standards, they make no more than satisfactory progress when compared with other children with similar starting points. This is because children's rate of progress is not assessed accurately enough. Furthermore, the monitoring of teaching and learning and the level of debate by staff and governors about children's achievement is not rigorous enough. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. The school is addressing the specific issues regarding the inadequate provision in the Reception class.

The personal development of the children is good. Children enjoy coming to school. They behave well and are keen to learn. Relationships between adults and children are good. Children are well cared for and know who to turn to if they need help. Attendance and punctuality are very good. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. Although there are examples of good and outstanding teaching, there is not enough consistency of practice across the school. Some lessons lack sufficient challenge and planned activities are not always well matched to children's learning needs.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff and governors share a vision, encapsulated in the school's mission statement, which seeks to develop the whole child. Evidence of the successful realisation of this vision is seen in the children's self-confidence and mature approach to school life. The majority of parents hold the school in high regard and are generally pleased with what the school offers their children. The school provides satisfactory value for money. The matters raised in the last inspection have been dealt with soundly and the school has the capacity to make the further improvements.

What the school should do to improve further

- develop the school's system for tracking achievement and assess more accurately children's rate of progress from their starting points
- improve the quality of teaching and learning by raising expectations and sharing good practice
- ensure that provision in the Foundation Stage meets the particular needs of young children and develop consistent practice to improve their progress
- improve the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work by sharing the responsibility among the wider leadership team

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school views the children's achievement as good but inspectors judge it to be satisfactory. The school has a more generous view because its expectations of children's progress are not high enough.

When children start in the Nursery, their skills and knowledge match those expected for their age. They make good progress in this class but this slows down in Reception where provision is inadequate. The children enter Year 1 with the levels of attainment expected of them but they could do better than this if their good start in the Nursery was maintained. In Years 1 and 2, children progress well and the majority reach higher than average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2005, standards at the end of Year 6 were above average in English and science and exceptionally high in mathematics. Although the results are above the national average, and this has been the trend, children are only making satisfactory progress through Years 3 to 6, given their original starting points. Whole-school targets are set without a rigorous analysis of children's potential.

The progress made by the children with learning difficulties and disabilities is good. This is because the school identifies specific needs early and provides appropriate support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good. Attendance is well above the national average and children clearly enjoy coming to school. As a result, they behave well and try hard to do their best in all their lessons, showing curiosity and a desire to do well. They form good and trusting relationships with adults and each other. The strong Catholic ethos of the school is apparent in every classroom and all aspects of the life of the school. A strong sense of right and wrong underpins the children's attitudes. Acts of collective worship provide opportunities for reflection and effectively promote the Christian ethos of the school. Consequently, children have a well developed understanding of spiritual, moral and social issues. There are many illustrations of children's spiritual reflections around the school, for example, a Year 2 child wrote a prayer thanking God for 'my talents of acrobatics and my back flips and loving my baby sister'. However, the school needs to do more to extend the children's knowledge of other beliefs and cultures.

Children are taught to understand how to keep themselves safe and to develop appropriate skills. Children in the Nursery were given an excellent lesson in the correct and safe techniques for using a (plastic) knife to cut soft fruit for themselves. Children show a good awareness of the value of eating healthily and are eager to participate in physical exercise. Older children undertake specific responsibilities, including looking after younger children at break times. All children take part in fundraising activities for local and national charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are examples of good and outstanding teaching but practice is not consistent across the school. Almost all lessons have good features, which include planned opportunities for speaking and listening, respectful relationships between children and adults, effective management of behaviour and good use of independent work.

In the best lessons, teachers plan activities which motivate, engage and challenge the children. For example, in a Year 4 literacy lesson, children made good progress because the lively and stimulating teaching style and use of strategies such as drama meant that children really understood the serious issues involved in their story about a moral dilemma. They listened very carefully to each other and gave mature and thoughtful responses to the questions they were asked. As a result, they can use very good and precise language to talk and write about feelings.

Where teaching is satisfactory, but less effective, expectations are not as high. Work is not always sufficiently challenging and tasks are sometimes too easy because they are not well matched to children's learning needs.

Children's work is marked regularly but this does not always provide them with sufficiently clear guidance about how to improve their work. 'Marking to targets' is used well by most teachers but this is not yet consistent across the school. Teachers have detailed information about the attainment of each child but they do not consider the rate of children's progress enough

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. It provides a balanced approach to learning which is broadly relevant to children's needs. Provision for ICT has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. All classes, except the Nursery, have interactive whiteboards which are beginning to have a positive impact on children's concentration and extend the range of texts and other resources available. Since September 2005, the school has organised for two teachers from the local secondary school, a science specialist college, to teach Years 5 and 6 on Wednesday afternoons. As a result, specialist teaching in ICT and science has helped to raise standards and achievement in these areas.

The new Foundation Stage coordinator has a clear vision about how to develop links both within the Foundation Stage, between the Nursery and Reception, and also into Key Stage 1. There has been some success in sharing the outdoor classroom but this is at a very early stage of development.

Children who have learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified early and they are given the support they need through a

range of different intervention strategies. The school offers a range of enrichment activities after school, including drama, art, choir, games and 'Imagineering', which is supported by a professional engineer. The choir has been particularly successful. In November 2005, it took part in a national event, as part of Solihull's massed choir, at the Royal Albert Hall.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides good levels of care and sound guidance and support. Staff are sensitive to the needs of individuals and relationships are good so that children are confident to ask for help. Parents appreciate this aspect of the school and comment favourably on the care and kindness offered to their families. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are in place and children receive good guidance on how to stay healthy and safe. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support and individual education plans are drawn up which include specific targets designed to help them make good progress in their learning, including those who have a particular talent. However, teachers' planning does not always show clearly how they are going to make certain that all children will be able to do as well as they can in lessons.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has successfully built a team committed to the strong Catholic ethos which permeates the school. In July 2005, the school was awarded Investors in People status. The school also gained the Healthy School's Standard (Level 3) in January 2006 and the Artsmark Silver Award in May 2006.

The school's work is not being monitored and evaluated well enough by the leadership team and subject leaders. This explains why leaders view a number of aspects more favourably than the inspectors. There is a wealth of data available about how the children are performing but their progress is not assessed effectively enough. The school has recently installed a detailed system to monitor progress but as yet has not set challenging year-on-year targets for children's achievement. Teaching and learning are monitored by the headteacher and strengths and development points are identified. However, there is not enough opportunity for subject leaders to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning so that they can develop a joint approach regarding expectations. As a result, there is a lack of consistency of practice across the school.

The school runs smoothly from day to day and there is sound financial control. Since her appointment, the headteacher has worked hard to improve the school environment. Over the past year, money appropriately set aside has been used to pay for major building improvements and developments in computer technology. When asked about what they liked about the school, children were quick to tell the inspectors '...it's much better since the renovations'.

The school values the views of parents and acts appropriately on their responses. For example, when recently some of the parents raised the issue of security, the headteacher and the governors worked hard to improve site security. The governing body, ably led by a well informed chair of governors, is supportive and actively involved in the school through various committees. That said, they do not hold the school sufficiently to account, especially in regard to how children do in relation to their potential.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We enjoyed our visit to St Andrew's before the half-term holiday. Thank you for being so friendly and taking the time to talk to us about your school. We enjoyed listening to the choir and we hope they have a good time at the Birmingham Symphony Hall singing with the Solihull massed choir.

These are the things we thought were good about your school

You enjoy school, attend regularly and behave well.

You look after each other and play well together.

You are taught how to keep safe and lead healthy and active lives.

The adults who look after you all work very hard.

Those of you who find school work hard are given special help.

We think the school could be better. We have told Mrs Coburn this and explained it has four areas to improve.

These are the things to improve

Make regular checks on how much progress you are all making.

Keep a closer eye on whether you are doing your best and making sure your targets are challenging enough.

Provide more exciting learning opportunities for the children in Reception.

Involve more of the teachers in checking on how things are improving in the school.

We wish children in Year 3 a very special day on Sunday 11 June when they receive their first Holy Communion. Well done for getting the Artsmark Silver!