



St Andrew's Church of England (VA) Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107548
Local Authority Calderdale
Inspection number 287848
Inspection dates 16–17 October 2006
Reporting inspector Roger Gill

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lightcliffe Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Brighouse
Age range of pupils	5–7		West Yorkshire HD6 2HH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01484 714964
Number on roll (school)	178	Fax number	01484 381070
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms Sue Stenning
		Headteacher	Mrs J Embleton
Date of previous school inspection	28 October 2002		

Age group 5–7	Inspection dates 16–17 October 2006	Inspection number 287848
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most children are from White British backgrounds. A small group is from minority ethnic heritages; very few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies from year to year, but is currently below average. There has been a sizeable turnover in staff in the last two years and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in that time.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Andrew's is a successful school, which has maintained its reputation well since it was last inspected. It is popular with children and parents because everyone is made to feel special and included; children's individuality is highly prized. The headteacher, governors and staff have a powerful influence on what happens. They know the school well and have created the unhurried yet purposeful culture that exists. As one parent said, correctly, 'There is a relaxed and helpful atmosphere between teachers and children.' Behaviour is good and this allows lessons to run smoothly. In such a context, children feel safe and well cared for. A healthy lifestyle is advocated well and children respond enthusiastically. They love the plates of fruit that are delivered to their classrooms by helpers who have usefully counted and sorted the pieces as a mathematical activity. Children enjoy everything on offer, demonstrating first-rate confidence by the time they are in Year 2. This was demonstrated superbly by the way in which children sang joyfully, narrated boldly and acted spiritedly in their production to parents of 'The King's Magic Cloaks,' which took place during the inspection. Children get on well together, relate positively to adults and contribute willingly to school life. This is because they are so well integrated into the work of the parish that they benefit from giving and helping on a wider canvas.

Learning is effective because good teaching develops basic skills systematically, parents are involved closely with their children's progress and the curriculum offers a rich array of additional activities. Children make good progress in from the Reception class onwards; many join the school with skills below those expected for their age and reach average standards by the end of Year 2. Although progress is good overall, most children's achievement in writing is less good than in other subjects. The more able pupils achieve particularly well. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often do well owing to the additional help that they receive, but even their writing is weaker when compared to the progress they make in mathematics and reading.

The school's aim of providing a well rounded education was given added impetus when the deputy headteacher, working closely with the insightful headteacher, provided an extra zest to school improvement. For example, children are now expected to do more for themselves in Reception, and the scheme of work in mathematics has been revised to create swifter progress in arithmetic by the end of Year 2. The school provides children with many valuable experiences that have a bearing on their academic progress. A grandparent, for example, runs the regular book exchange programme. This attracts a large number of keen parents and children. As a result, reading is viewed as a pleasurable activity at home and school, and children progress well in lessons.

The school gathers a great deal of information about children's progress and the subjects they are taught. The evaluation of this material, however, lacks precision on occasions. Consequently, aspects of teaching and learning which need to be improved, in writing for example, are not pinpointed clearly enough. This also applies to the scrutiny of children's test results and assessments. Nevertheless, leadership and management are good and have the capacity to help the school improve even more.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's achievement in writing
- Make more effective use of data on children's progress, together with other information on the quality of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards were average by the end of Year 2 in 2005. Inspection evidence confirms that standards were broadly average in 2006, even though the proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was above the national average. This demonstrates that children's achievement, often from a low starting point, is good overall. However, some children are capable of making better progress, particularly in writing. They compose sentences well, but are not confident enough in linking them together in different ways. Punctuation and the use of interesting vocabulary are sometimes too limited. Children make good progress in other subjects, for example in physical education and music, owing to the wide variety of opportunities they receive to extend and enhance their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This aspect is central to the ethos of this school and as a result, children's personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy coming to school, which is usually reflected in their above average attendance. Last year's below average figures were caused primarily by an untypically high number of absences through illness. The good behaviour and positive attitudes are sometimes elevated to an outstanding level when, for example Biblical stories in worship or opportunities to sing and act in public, capture their imaginations.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop a good understanding of their community and the lifestyles and beliefs of others. Children lack opportunities to voice their opinions formally. A school council is planned for, but not yet in place. This prevents, at the moment, their personal development from being better than good.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching ensures that children learn well. Successful lessons are engaging. Teachers use resources, for example, electronic whiteboards and large puppets, effectively to capture children's interest. Children who find learning difficult receive additional assistance, which is beneficial. There are improved opportunities for play

in Reception. These have a positive effect such as when children outside build towers in ascending order to develop their skills in mathematics. The systematic approach to the teaching of letter sounds, for example in Year 1, linked with the good advice about how to read sentences, is having a beneficial impact on children's progress. By comparison, advice about writing is not so well developed. The assessment of children's learning is good, particularly in Year 2, but sometimes not enough is done throughout the school to evaluate how groups and classes have done and precisely what could be improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum contributes well to the academic progress made by children and their personal development. The most and least able are helped positively by the extra help given to them. There is a very beneficial range of additional activities such as choir and themed weeks. Children were particularly fascinated by the week devoted to the culture of different countries around the world. These coupled with the summer school, and the many visits and visitors, form an outstanding element of the curriculum. Events such as African drumming or Polish folk dancing add very well to children's cultural development. The curriculum for the teaching of writing and mathematics has recently been enhanced, but it is too soon to see the results in children's progress. By contrast, the enhanced opportunities for music and physical education are already having a good influence on learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children are cared for and supported with sensitivity. A high priority is placed on welfare; parents are consulted well when necessary. The school works effectively with many others, such as the educational welfare officer and the psychologist, to shape personal development. Child protection procedures and risk assessments are in place and working well. A listening ear is always available for any child in difficulty. Positive relationships and a good curriculum ensure that children know about keeping fit, healthy and safe. The advice given to children about how to improve their work is generally good, but there are occasions when they are not informed fully enough about the aim of activities. This limits the opportunities, particularly in writing, for children to think about how well they are doing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of all those concerned, including governors, have successfully maintained existing successes and improved things where necessary. The school is correct in judging its effectiveness to be good, but slightly over optimistic about the rate of progress with regard to some of the recent initiatives. There is scope for some children to make even better progress. Staff, including teaching assistants,

have responded well to the lead given by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Subject leaders are increasingly taking on a fuller role in school self-evaluation, which was a key issue in the last inspection. The school gives good value for money, especially as pupils' progress has remained good in spite of staff turnover. The lack of in depth evaluation in some cases does not detract from the generally good effect of leadership and management.

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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

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 behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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?	2

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.

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit because everyone was so welcoming and friendly. It is a good school and we would like to share with you what we thought.

These are some of the things that we found to be good about your school:

- we enjoyed lessons a lot especially when the puppets came out to help you
- the choir and 'The King's Magic Cloaks' production were wonderful
- your headteacher and all the staff try very hard to help you be fit, healthy and safe
- you are very lucky to have so many interesting things to do
- all the adults in school care for you well.

We know everyone wants to do even better and we have suggested two things that we think will help:

- everyone needs to work together to help you make the best possible progress in writing
- your teachers should look at your work and test results even more closely so that they can help each one of you to do as well as you can.

You can all help by trying hard to improve your writing. We know you can do it.