

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Cromhall

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109181
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	309916
Inspection date	13 February 2008
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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	46
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Legg
Headteacher	Esther M Saunders
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2005
School address	Church Lane Cromhall Wotton-under-Edge GL12 8AL
Telephone number	01454 294498
Fax number	01454 294498

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Andrew's Church of England Primary is a very small village school. It has fewer than average pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the majority of whom have dyslexia. Almost all pupils are White British and all speak English as their first language. Changes in the local population have meant a fall in the number of pupils at the school since the previous inspection.

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 Church of England Primary School provides a good education. It has some outstanding features. The headteacher and her staff strive to maximise the benefits of small schools and minimise some of the possible disadvantages, such as isolation. In this they are very successful. Pupils and parents praise the benefits of the school's small size and see no drawbacks. One parent wrote, 'St Andrew's is a lovely school. It has a safe and nurturing environment in which children can learn and develop.'

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils are happy at school and consider that there is little that needs improvement. Behaviour is outstanding and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the community. They take part enthusiastically in the school council, ensuring that all pupils' views are heard and, where possible, acted upon. Many take on regular responsibilities within the school, such as taking care of the youngest pupils, and they develop very good independence. They participate keenly in events on a local and international scale.

Children enter the school with the expected level of skills; they leave with above-average standards and their achievement is good. Close attention paid by the school to addressing areas of weakness and to supporting and challenging each pupil ensures that all progress well. Teaching is good. Lessons are lively, interesting and fun for pupils and staff and this promotes good learning. Marking is not sufficiently analytical and well linked to pupils' targets. The curriculum is outstanding. It provides a great breadth of experiences for pupils and is particularly stimulating. This is creditable in such a small school.

St Andrew's is a safe, caring school which looks after every pupil well, effectively promoting equal opportunities for all. Academic support and guidance is effective but the advice offered to pupils is not sufficiently sharp in providing clear advice.

Good leadership and management underpin the school's many qualities. Careful self-evaluation gives the school a clear view of its strengths and areas it needs to address. The school development plan is an effective tool to help keep the school on track and plan effectively for the future. Governors are supportive and generally well informed, challenging the school as required.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage is improving and the school has effective new procedures to record children's progress, but these have not yet impacted fully on achievement. Teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory overall. Children settle quickly into school routines and their achievement in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy is good. The school provides good resources and accommodation that helps to promote children's developing independence. Well-organised support for all children enables them to undertake tasks with obvious enjoyment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop target setting for pupils in order to promote better achievement, with learning aims that are clear, personal and short-term.
- Ensure marking gives consistently helpful advice.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter and leave the Foundation Stage with the expected level of skills. Current standards in Year 6 are above average and this indicates that achievement for all groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties such as dyslexia, is good.

Children settle readily into school when they start in the Foundation Stage, making particularly good gains in personal, social and emotional development. The skills they develop in their Reception year, especially in making relationships and developing self-esteem, are greatly in evidence as they move up the school.

Good teaching and learning ensure that pupils achieve well across Key Stages 1 and 2. While national test results indicate some yearly fluctuations in standards and achievement, depending on the characteristics of the very small year groups, the school has tackled areas of weakness well and current standards in Year 2 and Year 6 are above average in all subjects. The quality of support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is effective and enables these pupils to achieve as well as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

'You'll get well looked after and the teachers are fun,' commented one Year 6 pupil. Pupils enjoy coming to school very much and know that they are well cared for. They relate well to one another, enjoying opportunities to work alone, in groups and teams. Pupils develop strong independence and confidence that contribute well to their good future economic well-being, and their behaviour is outstanding. They report that there is no significant bullying. Attendance is above average.

Pupils know how to keep safe. They are aware of dangers on the roads, for example, when coming along the country lanes on their way to school, and when using the Internet, and they take appropriate precautions. They enjoy the many sporting opportunities the school offers both during and after school and understand the value of exercise and eating well to help them remain healthy.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Thanks to the school's efforts, they have a very good grasp of other cultures across the world. They show a very good awareness of their own and others' beliefs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is generally lively and engaging and enlists pupils as keen participants in their own learning. Teachers are self-assured and display good subject knowledge. This, in turn, gives pupils confidence in lessons and they work very well both in whole-class settings and independently. Because behaviour is outstanding, interruptions to learning are rare. This allows teachers to run lessons at a brisk pace, so that pupils are challenged to complete tasks quickly and effectively. Teachers use interactive whiteboards very well to add variety to lessons and employ them intelligently to involve pupils actively in their learning.

Questioning is good, so that regular informal assessment takes place. The collation of formal assessments feeds into careful tracking of pupils' progress and leads to appropriate intervention when required. Teaching assistants know pupils well and add subtle but effective support in all elements of lessons.

Most marking is systematic but does not consistently provide enough guidance to pupils about how their work could be improved. Marking does not refer to pupils' targets sufficiently well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum provides an excellent breadth of opportunities. This varied diet helps to make learning both interesting and fun. Good links with other local primary and secondary schools ensure that there are numerous sporting and cultural activities available. For example, all Key Stage 2 pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn to play the violin or cello. All pupils, whatever their age, enjoy French lessons.

Careful planning for personal, social and health education ensures outstanding outcomes for pupils. Strong international links, including occasional visits to partner European schools, broaden pupils' horizons. There are very good opportunities for after-school sporting and other activities, which many pupils enthusiastically take up. Visits and visitors help reduce the potential isolation of this rural school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school offers very good pastoral care to its pupils. All statutory requirements are met and arrangements for safeguarding and risk assessment are robust. Pupils know that there are numerous adults they can turn to if they are upset or worried. This secure environment promotes pupils' personal and academic development very well. Learners who may be at risk or who need extra support are identified early and effective arrangements are made to keep them engaged in all aspects of school life.

Pupils receive targets in English and mathematics and these promote their achievement well. Current targets tend to be too impersonal and run for lengthy periods, thus rendering them less effective than they might be.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and staff work in close partnership to ensure that all pupils achieve well, both academically and personally. The inclusion of all pupils and the widening of their horizons is central to the school's philosophy. Leadership has focused on high standards and has effectively addressed areas of concern such as the dip in standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. Outstandingly good links with other schools both locally and abroad, as well as with the church and other institutions, help offset some of the potential disadvantages of being a small school.

The school has effective routines for self-evaluation which give it a good grasp of its strengths and weaknesses. The school improvement plan sets well-judged targets for improvement and is regularly reviewed and updated. These processes have ensured that the school has improved

well since the previous inspection and its track record indicates that its capacity for improvement in the future is also good.

Governors monitor the school through regular visits and have a satisfactory understanding of the school. They act well as critical friends but have not considered in detail what actions may be required if the number of pupils attending the school continues to decline. Effective financial management has ensured that the school is well resourced and has pleasant, well-maintained accommodation.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 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	1
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	2
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 the 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?	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.

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	2
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

14 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Cromhall, Gloucestershire GL12 8AL

Thank you very much for being so helpful during my busy day inspecting the school recently.

St Andrew's is a good school and some things are excellent. I know you like it there because you and your parents told me. You especially like knowing everybody well in such a small school. The headteacher and staff run the school well and are very keen to help you do your best. Pupils achieve well, both in subjects and in personal development. By the time you leave school, standards are better than average. Your behaviour is excellent and this is a big help in lessons where you learn well, helped by good and interesting teaching.

The school provides an outstanding mixture of subjects and topics to study and very interesting activities, which you enjoy a lot. The excellent links with other schools and organisations, near and far, is a great help in this. The school cares for all pupils well but the advice given to you about how to improve your work could be better.

- Even good schools can improve. There are two important things I want the school to do:
- The targets in your books should be more about your learning needs and should not take so long to reach. If you find your targets are difficult to understand or to reach you should ask your teachers to help.
- Marking should always offer clear advice to help you improve.

Once again, thank you for all your help. It was a pleasure meeting you.

With all good wishes,

John Carnaghan Lead inspector

14 February 2008

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