

St Andrews Church of England Primary School, Dearnley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105807
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	324274
Inspection date	27 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Aitken

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	188
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sam Stericker
Headteacher	Mrs Barbara Towse
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Union Road Rochdale Lancashire OL12 9QA
Telephone number	01706 378991

Age group	5–11
Inspection date	27 March 2009
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Fax number

01706 370525

Age group	5-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' writing; the quality of assessment; and the impact of modifications to the timetable on pupils' personal development and academic standards. The inspectors collected evidence from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data, and the school's own assessment record, policies and minutes. The school was observed at work and discussions were held with members of staff, pupils and the chair of governors. Replies to the parents' questionnaires were also considered. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a slightly below average size school situated to the north-east of the town centre. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The level of children's attainment on entry has fallen since the previous inspection. More pupils than is usually the case join or leave the school at other than the usual times.

The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage through a Reception class. The school holds the National Healthy School's Award, the Activemark and the Eco-Schools Silver Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Pupils know that they matter at St Andrew's. They flourish in this safe and supportive environment and develop exceptionally well the personal qualities they need to succeed in later life.

Pupils achieve well academically. From starting points in Reception, which are below those typical for their age, children make good progress. By the time they start Year 1 most pupils have achieved the early learning goals, but a few weaknesses remain, particularly in aspects of communication and language and of problem solving and reasoning. This start is built on well in Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, standards are usually above average. Pupils make especially good progress in writing. This is because the school has established tried and tested methods for developing this skill. By Year 2, most pupils have acquired a solid understanding of writing terminology and have ample, well structured opportunities to practise and to extend their writing. This strength is built upon consistently in the later years, not only in separate literacy lessons, but also, for example, in project work in other subjects and in letters thanking the fire service for their visits. The school has recognised a few minor variations between the progress of boys and girls in English and mathematics and put in place well considered strategies to close the gaps. These have been particularly successful in English. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2 and generally reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The school makes good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This enables these pupils to make equally good progress as their classmates.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding overall. Pupils have a highly developed awareness of why it is important to eat healthily and to value exercise. In lessons, pupils are quick to spot someone who might need some extra help and offer this very willingly. Their whole-hearted enjoyment of school is demonstrated by their highly positive attitudes, full participation in lessons and above average attendance. Older pupils, including the St Andrew's Saints, offer useful extra support to the younger children on the playground. Other pupils make a valuable contribution to school life, for example, as student councillors and as members of the eco-team. Assemblies promote positive attitudes and pupils' self-esteem exceptionally well. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and they behave exceptionally well. They make good use of opportunities to develop enterprise skills through, for example, the Easter egg project.

The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. It is very carefully reviewed and adapted to tackle any minor differences in pupils' achievement. Accurate assessments in English, mathematics and science provide a firm basis for support programmes for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those pupils who would benefit from an extra boost to their learning. Pupils' views on the curriculum are sought both formally and informally and these help to shape its content. The school is currently modifying the curriculum to promote creativity and enhance pupils' enjoyment and achievement. This approach is proving successful in reinforcing pupils' writing skills and in providing pupils with good opportunities to develop research skills.

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. A well balanced mix of explanations, activities and discussion ensures that pupils are fully involved in their learning. Relationships are excellent and pupils respond eagerly to the teachers' questions. Teachers target their questions expertly to ensure that no one is missed out or wavers in their concentration. The

pace of learning is brisk and pupils work hard throughout the lesson. Teaching assistants are deployed well and are pro-active in supporting pupils. While teachers provide pupils with good verbal feedback, otherwise satisfactory marking does not always relate to learning objectives nor provide pupils with specific guidance as to how they can improve their work.

The school cares for, guides and supports pupils well. It liaises well with outside agencies to remove or reduce barriers to learning for those pupils with identified needs. Relevant, required procedures are in place for child protection, for safeguarding pupils and for health and safety. Pupils are very happy in school because they know that their views will be considered and acted upon by staff, who know them exceptionally well. The school applies procedures assiduously to ensure pupils attend well. Academic guidance is good. The school checks on pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science methodically to ensure that the vast majority reach their challenging targets, while a few exceed them. The school has good plans in place to improve assessment in information and communication technology and other subjects.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and other senior staff are highly experienced and guide the work of the school astutely. Leaders form an accurate, honest appraisal of strengths and areas for further development in the curriculum. Senior leaders make good use of training and performance management procedures to develop the skills of middle leaders and to hold colleagues effectively to account for pupils' standards and achievement. They do all they can to promote equality of opportunity and to eliminate any discrimination. The school has taken recent, useful steps to develop stronger multi-cultural links to enhance its existing good promotion of community cohesion. Governors take a keen interest in the work of the school and work effectively to support its continuing development. The school has maintained, and in some respects improved, the good quality of provision since its previous inspection. It has good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in Reception especially in their personal and social skills and in aspects of literacy. The more able children make particularly good progress in writing. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities acquire the basic skills at a good rate. Good relationships with staff help children to settle in quickly and enjoy school. While most children show initiative and persevere with tasks, a few are less independent. Children behave well and have an excellent awareness of safety. For example, children were quick to point out the various steps George the puppet could have taken to avoid injury. The curriculum provides an appropriate balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. The staff make good use of the carpet sessions, for example, to develop children's understanding of writing practice. On a few occasions, opportunities are missed in follow-up activities to reinforce learning and to develop children's thinking and speaking skills fully. The staff pay close attention to ensure children's welfare requirements are fully met. Children's achievements are efficiently recorded to inform subsequent planning. Leadership and management are good. The new Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear overview of the progress of Reception children and a developing awareness of what needs to be done to improve provision further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of opportunities to develop children's thinking and speaking skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Ensure that written assessment provides good guidance for pupils in improving their work.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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 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

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	1
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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

My colleague and I really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you at your school when we inspected it recently.

You go to a good school and some features of its work are outstanding. These are some things that really stood out.

- Top of the list is your excellent personal development. You know you are important at St Andrew's because the staff listen to you and take heed of your views on matters great and small. You get on very well with each other, enjoy school a lot and have very positive attitudes.
- The children in Reception get off to a good start, which sets them up well for Year 1.
- You make good progress in all your subjects and your standards are usually above average in Year 6. You make particularly good progress in your writing because it is very well taught and you can extend your writing in lots of interesting ways.
- The headteacher and her senior staff direct the work of the school well. They check carefully on the progress you make, take quick action if you need extra help and are always keen to try out new ways of making your learning more interesting. The project lessons are a good example of this.

I have asked your school to do two things to make it even better.

- Make sure the children in Reception get lots of chances to improve their thinking and speaking skills.
- Make sure that the teachers mark your work really well to help you improve your work.

You can help by keeping up your good attendance and continuing to try hard.