

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided School, Preston, Weymouth

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113835
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	357433
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	376
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Iain Stone
Headteacher	Vanessa Lucas
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The team observed 15 teachers in 19 lessons or part sessions. Meetings were held with the School Improvement Partner, groups of pupils, staff and governors. Inspectors looked at the school's self-evaluation documents, external monitoring reports and development planning. Questionnaires were received from 111 parents and carers and these were analysed alongside those completed by staff and pupils.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The declining trend of results at the end of Year 6.
- The gap between the attainment of boys and girls in reading and writing and those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- How well the teaching and curriculum meet the needs and interests of the boys.

Information about the school

St Andrew's is a large primary school which serves Preston, an area of predominately owner-occupied properties, and Littlemoor, which consists of newly-built affordable homes and an established area of social housing. Nearly all the pupils come from White British families and no-one speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free schools is low but is rising. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has a falling roll because there is a decline in the number of primary-aged pupils requiring school places in the local area. Coupled with the proximity of middle schools who take pupils at the start of Year 5, most of the available spaces are at the top end of the school. These are allocated to pupils who have experienced difficulties elsewhere or whose families relocate to the area. Last academic year, approximately 60 per cent of pupils in Year 6 joined the school part way through their primary education. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes which work together as a unit. The school runs its own breakfast club. There is a pre-school on site which is not managed by the school. The school has achieved numerous awards including a recognised status in art, information and communication technology and basic skills, healthy living, working with international schools, respecting the rights of others and the Investors in People award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Andrew's provides a good education for its pupils. There are many outstanding elements in the school. Its motto, 'To live and live splendidly', is achieved with aplomb. The first-class focus on the personal and pastoral needs of each pupil is driven by the passion of the headteacher and well supported by her effective staff team. Consequently, pupils develop into confident young people who are extremely well prepared to look after themselves in a safe and healthy manner and exceptionally skilled in contributing as responsible citizens within their own and the wider community. The school has a remarkably big heart and the powerful links forged, both locally and nationally, have enriched the lives in all the communities involved. Pupils are extremely reflective in their thinking. For example, their good understanding of different religions and beliefs, are exceptionally well considered. As one parent explained, 'Our children feel secure and safe and valued here. They are developing into well rounded and socially aware individuals.' Most pupils love school and one or two think 'it is perfect'. They particularly enjoy their involvement in creating and planning topic work and appreciate the way that their learning is brought alive through trips and visits out of school. Pupils are taught well and the good assessment systems help them understand how to improve their work. Occasionally, pupils are required to sit for too long listening to their teacher and the support provided by teaching assistants is variable. The school recognises that these inconsistencies could be ironed out quickly if there were a more systematic approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning.

At the time of the last inspection, standards were above the national average. Current standards are average. This is a consequence of the increase in mobility at the top end of the school. Pupils who started their education at St Andrew's with broadly average standards achieve well as they move up through the school. Their attainment is above average at the end of Year 6. However, the attainment of most pupils who join the school in Years 5 and 6 is below that expected for their age group. Nevertheless, they make good progress in their learning and attain average standards. Good intervention, positive support and well-planned interesting activities ensure that their achievement is also good. The gender gap in reading and writing has been successfully narrowed by improving boys' engagement in their own learning. This has been achieved by introducing themes that motivate the boys and using more practically-based teaching methods. National data indicates that the small proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals do not achieve as well as their peers. The school has not fully investigated this trend. It accepts that it needs to sharpen its overall systems for tracking the attainment of groups of pupils so that it can identify and then rectify

quickly any issues it identifies. Nevertheless, self-evaluation is accurate and the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that it is consistent through the school.
- Refine tracking systems so that groups of pupils who are not performing as well as they should be are identified swiftly and given additional support. Refine tracking systems so that groups of pupils who are not performing as well as they should be are identified swiftly and given additional support.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The effective way the school enables pupils to achieve and enjoy was well illustrated in a Year 3 literacy lesson where the work was linked to a writing task undertaken in a previous session. Having looked at the detailed comments made in the marking, the teacher then modelled best practice visually on the interactive whiteboard. A timed group activity supported the pupils' use of punctuation, adjectives and sentences and then they enthusiastically checked their own accuracy. The range of teaching strategies, the high-quality input by the class teacher, and the good pace of the session enabled all pupils to achieve well and enjoy their learning.

Following a two-year dip in English results, there has been a strong focus on improving reading and writing skills. Encouraging talk, linking literacy skills across different subjects and revamping reading sessions have resulted in better outcomes for the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive effective support from teaching assistants and specialist help from outside agencies which is focused on individual needs.

Pupils demonstrate how safe they feel when they talk convincingly about feeling confident when they approach adults in school. They enthusiastically explain the importance of eating fruit and vegetables and describe why exercise keeps their hearts healthy. The installation of a water fountain and improvements to the playground are excellent examples of how the pupils contribute to their own community. The impressive way in which each class has creatively raised funds from a £10 start has provided their link school in Kenya with essential equipment.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Pupils engage well in their learning because adults value the contributions they make. Secure subject knowledge, well-planned sessions and the use of interesting resources captivate the pupils' attention and this enables them to develop their skills well. One group of Year 4 pupils enjoyed acting out 'powerful verbs', which helped them understand how to use these words. Occasionally, when pupils sit for a long time, the pace of the lesson drops, individuals fidget and quality learning time is lost. Support from teaching assistants is variable but when they are deployed well, they make a strong contribution to pupils requiring additional support. Most teachers adhere to the marking policy where the use of 'perfect pink' and 'growth for green' pens ensure that the pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. The involvement of the pupils in their programmes of work ensures that they are stimulated and motivated by the topics. By following a 'chocolate' theme, Year 3 have studied fair trade and health issues and enjoyed cooking activities. Musical, sporting, art and gardening clubs ensure that the pupils develop a diverse range of interests out of the classroom. Memorable trips to the local area and involvement in an Olympic project with other schools to provide examples of how the curriculum is exceptionally well moulded to meet local circumstances. A thorough knowledge of each child and extremely close links with families and specialist outside agencies enable the school to provide pastoral care, support and guidance that is second to none.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The creativity of the headteacher, coupled with the effectiveness of senior staff, ensure that staff morale is high, and their shared sense of purpose effectively shapes the work of the school. Nevertheless, there is a lack of consistency in systems for observing lessons and evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Whilst the school has deployed successful strategies to close the gap between the attainment of boys and girls in reading and writing, there is not, as yet, a robust approach to tracking and monitoring the progress different groups make over time. The school is fully aware of this and has identified ways to rectify it. Governors are supportive of staff, and their regular attendance in the day-to-day life of the school ensures that they have a good understanding of its strengths and areas of weakness. New governors are gaining confidence in their role and are starting to challenge the work of the school.

The school safeguards its pupils exceptionally well, meeting all the current statutory requirements and providing excellent quality assurance systems and risk assessment checks. There is absolutely no tolerance of bullying or discrimination. Parents and carers enjoy an extremely positive relationship with the school. Staff are justifiably proud of the way they engage with them, and sessions for family learning, email access to individual teachers and forums for discussion are exceptionally well received. The excellent partnerships which have been forged between the school and social services ensure that families are supported very effectively. The 'friendship' gate which links it with the neighbouring Westfield School signifies the outstanding bond shared between the two schools. This partnership results in staff sharing best practice and pupils and parents benefiting from specialist activities. The school's strong Christian ethos has far-reaching effects on its own community through church links and close working relationships within the local group of schools. By fundraising for their Kenyan partner school, pupils at St Andrews have not only been able to improve the quality of education at this school but have also gained an exceptionally strong understanding of how they can make a difference to the lives of other young people.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress from their different starting points and most reach all the early learning goals by the time they move to Year 1. This is because they are taught well by adults who have a good understanding of the needs of this age group. Interesting topics are planned to make sure that the children engage in their learning. There is a good balance between tasks led by the teacher and opportunities for children to choose and plan their own activities. For example, an adult supported a small group of children making jam tarts. There was great excitement as they followed the instructions to roll out the pastry skilfully, cut out the tart shapes carefully and place them in the baking tray. There was much conversation as the children discussed how they would taste sweet and there was a clear understanding that they should not eat too many of them because 'they are full of sugar and too much sugar makes your teeth go black'. Outside, children enthusiastically developed their physical skills playing with the scooters and developing their writing skills on a large whiteboard.

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is led well and managed collectively by a team who cooperate effectively together. They ensure that the children's welfare is a top priority and all individuals are well cared for. The early years team has identified the need to develop further children's outdoor play and has already started to make some positive changes to the activities available for these young children at break times.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The number of returned questionnaires was high and, as such, gives a very firm indication of the positive views of parents and carers. Although a very small minority of parents and carers expressed unhappiness about the way the school was led and managed and how suggestions and concerns were dealt with, inspectors could not endorse these views. The vast majority of parents and carers feel 'very proud' to say their children attend St Andrews'. In fact, as one parent wrote, 'Both my children look forward to going to school, to learn every day which is a testament to the staff and headmistress.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 111 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 375 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	77	69	31	28	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	65	59	43	39	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	50	45	55	50	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	50	47	42	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	63	57	44	40	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	54	44	40	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	59	40	36	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	67	55	40	36	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	51	49	44	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	40	47	42	6	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	44	49	44	7	6	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	47	42	49	44	5	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	68	61	36	35	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



16 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Weymouth, DT3 6AA

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed spending time with you and finding out about all the things you do. I would like to say a particular thank you to those pupils I met who told me about life at your school.

We agree with your parents that your school provides you with a good education. We were impressed with the way you know how to keep fit and healthy, and you have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe. You really enjoy coming to school and it is clear that you take a full part in its life. You behave very respectfully in worship and are friendly and courteous in and around the school. However, very occasionally lessons are disrupted by fidgeting. By using your council to influence school management decisions, and through your extremely thoughtful links with Kairuni Primary, you demonstrate how well you are developing into first-class citizens. Your participation in these events and the good progress you make in your academic work prepare you well for the future.

Your teachers plan extremely interesting activities and this encourages you to learn because the themes they choose are meaningful to you. They use lots of practical activities and this helps you understand what you are learning. I was impressed that you all have targets and use your teacher's marking to help you move onto the next step in your learning.

Your headteacher and the other adults involved in leading and managing your school do a good job and make sure that you receive a well-rounded education. We have asked them to make sure that they check you consistently receive the best quality teaching. We have also asked them to sharpen up their systems to check that you are all

progressing well as you move through the school.

Once again, thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults in school to make sure St Andrew's gets even better.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone

Her Majesty's Inspector

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