

St Andrew's CofE VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122017
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	359145
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Carol Worthington

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Brett
Headteacher	Deborah Cushing
Date of previous school inspection	20 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons led by eight different teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and the Chair of the Governing Body. Discussions were held with three groups of pupils from Key Stage 2. Many pupils were spoken to informally. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of assessments of pupils' attainment, tracking of their progress and samples of their work in books. All safeguarding documents were scrutinised. Inspectors analysed 83 parents' and carers' questionnaires and those completed by 108 Key Stage 2 pupils and 18 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors investigated whether the improvements in attainment and progress over the past two years in Key Stage 2 are being maintained, and further improved upon, by consistency of teaching and learning throughout the Key Stage.
- They looked at whether the gap between girls' and boys' attainment is closing, and whether White British boys in particular, are making consistently good progress and attaining higher standards throughout the school.
- They looked at how effective new strategies introduced in Reception and Key Stage 1 are, in raising standards in reading, writing and mathematics, by the end of Year 2.
- Inspectors investigated the impact of the school's 'Assertive Mentoring' initiative on pupils' own understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Information about the school

This smaller-than-average primary school is situated close to a large housing development on the outskirts of Northampton. The majority of pupils are of White British origin, but about a third come from other minority ethnic groups. Nearly all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of these pupils have needs that include physical disabilities and specific learning or behavioural difficulties. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school has National Healthy Schools Enhanced status and a Silver International Award.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Andrew's C of E Primary is a good school, which has made rapid improvement from the satisfactory grading at its previous inspection. Through the exceptional leadership of its headteacher, the school has moved in just five years from a category needing significant improvement to its current position. This has been achieved by a relentless focus on improvement, based on highly accurate school evaluation. Senior and subject leaders created a climate for the school's continuing improvement when they introduced the 'Assertive Mentoring' strategy two years ago in Key Stage 2. This involves individual pupils having half-termly individual progress discussions with their teacher, lasting about 20 minutes. It has impacted significantly on both pupils' academic and personal development. Standards in English and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 have risen from significantly below average in 2008, to significantly above in 2010. Current standards in Key Stage 2 are being maintained at this above average level. Because of this rapid and sustained improvement, the school has good capacity to improve further.

In Key Stage 1, standards have been below average for some time, but are starting to improve because Reception children's attainment is now closer to that expected for their age, so pupils enter Year 1 at a higher level than in previous years. They make at least satisfactory, and often good progress, but not yet so rapid as in Key Stage 2. This is because they are not so focused on targets and understanding how to improve. 'Assertive Mentoring' is now being introduced in Key Stage 1, but has not yet had time to impact fully on progress. Current Year 2 standards are still a little below average because past underachievement is still being made up.

The quality of teaching has improved from satisfactory to good since the previous inspection, enabling pupils of all abilities to achieve well and make good progress. One reason for this is the use of regular and accurate assessment from weekly 'Big Write', 'Big Read' and 'Big Maths' sessions to present further challenging work to move learning on. This is particularly well established in Key Stage 2, less so in Key Stage 1.

Underachievement is quickly identified and corrected, for example, the school identified that White British boys were an underachieving group, but can now show they are making good progress and attaining above average standards. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those from minority ethnic groups, also make good progress.

Discussions with their teachers also deal with pupils' personal attributes, for example, behaviour, attitudes, attendance and punctuality. This makes a strong contribution to the excellent care, guidance and support pupils receive. Their all-round performance is reviewed, and targets are set for improvement, often by pupils themselves, who show good knowledge of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The urge to avoid red in the 'traffic light' colour coding is strong for both pupils and their

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parents, and a powerful incentive for hard work and improvement. As a result, attendance has dramatically improved from satisfactory to well above average, and behaviour, whilst good overall, is often exemplary in Key Stage 2 lessons.

Pupils' excellent contribution to the life of the school includes acting as pupil mentors for the induction of new pupils and membership of a 'Kenya' club and 'Whizzing Ideas' group which runs the healthy tuck-shop. They develop as responsible and caring young people, who know how to keep safe and healthy. They have a strong understanding of the shared values of their school community. These, together with their good literacy, numeracy and computer skills, prepare them well for life at secondary school and beyond. The school is well regarded in the local community, where it takes part in many church events and provides popular 'fun days' for its own families and those from other local schools. It has an excellent partnership with parents and carers, some of whom are trained to help with the 'Big Read' activity.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and progress in Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring that pupils have a stronger focus on targets and understanding of how to improve their work
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment to match tasks more closely to ability levels.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge which are below expectation for their age. Virtually all make good progress and attain above average standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave for their secondary school. Pupils in Year 6 made good progress when enjoying the challenge of solving problems related to the Fibonacci number sequence. In Year 5, pupils were delighted when writing their own creation stories; very lively group discussions showed off pupils' good spoken English and their ability to assume roles within a group. Year 1 pupils enjoyed drama in preparation for writing about a walk in a magical forest. Pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 1 made better progress than other groups when consolidating work on adding up, using the number of legs of cut-out snails, spiders, dogs and crabs, because of the valuable support and guidance given by teaching assistants.

Pupils' consistently good behaviour and attitudes are major factors in enhancing learning. In many Key Stage 2 lessons, behaviour was exemplary. Pupils say they enjoy lessons, because 'teachers make you laugh and give you problems and quizzes' Pupils' social skills are very well developed; they work and play harmoniously together and willingly take on responsibilities as monitors and school councillors. At lunch times, older pupils act as role models for good behaviour as they supervise and check that younger ones have eaten healthy food at each table. They enjoy very active playtimes and sporting clubs. Pupils show their care for others by a wide variety of charitable giving, both in their immediate neighbourhood and further afield.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers capture pupils' interests by imaginative planning of work with stimulating and relevant activities. For example, a lesson on persuasive language included looking at the different popular adverts and pupils being encouraged to write their own jingle by the teacher, who sang one she had written herself. Teachers make good use of the 'Big Write', 'Big Read' and 'Big Maths' every week to check pupils' progress and identify areas where this needs improvement. When new targets are set, they are sent home and fully shared with parents and carers.

The curriculum meets all requirements. Curriculum themes are matched to pupils' interests, gained from regular surveys. Subject skills are also developed through specific days devoted to them. Arrangements for developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are particularly strong features. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide variety of clubs and enrichment opportunities, including a large choir, cooking and 'cup-stacking'. Partnership with a well-known bank has resulted in many benefits, including a sensory garden and a reading partner scheme. Local sports partnerships enhance the school's sporting provision.

Very well targeted support for all pupils enables them to make the best of the opportunities provided by the school. Pastoral care retains the very high quality seen at the previous inspection. Assertive mentoring has been running for two years in Years 3 to 6. Personal targets from this make a significant contribution to the excellent behaviour and

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attitudes to learning seen in Key Stage 2 classes. The work of the learning mentor and family support worker is very important in making sure that pupils attend school, and they are confident they can talk to an adult if they are worried. Exemplary guidance is given to pupils and their families when they start school and leave for secondary education. The school's work with children and families facing challenging circumstances is outstanding. There are many examples of barriers to learning being overcome for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leadership team provides good expertise and is effective in the communication of its own high expectations. Consequently, all staff work as a cohesive team with a strong drive for further improvement. Frequent monitoring of teaching and learning has been effective in increasing the proportion of good teaching since the previous inspection. Very challenging targets are set for all pupils and frequently exceeded in Key Stage 2. As a result of recent new leadership strategies in Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is already evidence of improved standards and progress, particularly in the Reception class.

The governing body's effectiveness is good; it is well led and organised. Governors have specific roles. They carry out monitoring visits and are effective in challenging the school for further improvement. Governors are vigilant in ensuring that good provision for safeguarding retains its high priority by regularly monitoring and evaluating its effectiveness, taking good account of the views of pupils and their parents and carers. The school's meticulous attention to CRB checking and the record kept, is an exemplary model of its kind.

This is a school where everyone has equally good opportunities to succeed, and is expected to do so. All pupils have individual targets to achieve, based on careful and frequent assessments of their progress. Gaps between boys' and girls' achievements have been addressed and are rapidly narrowing. They all have opportunities to take part in the excellent enrichment programmes. There is an outstanding partnership with parents and carers. The vast majority who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire were very positive about their children's experiences at the school. All reported their children are kept safe in school.

The school is a cohesive community where adults and children from different minority ethnic groups noticeably get on well together. Harmony is encouraged by the sharing of values, such as patience, which are common to all. There have been no racial issues or

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exclusions. Leaders make good use of assemblies, visits and visitors to celebrate diversity and give pupils first-hand experience of an even wider cultural mix. This is also fostered by joint undertakings with other schools in its local 'cluster' and further afield. The school has achieved a Silver International award for its links in Poland, Turkey and the Kenyan school, for which the 'Kenya Club' is raising funds.

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
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities below those expected for their age, particularly so in speech and language. Consistently good teaching by all adults who work with the children ensures that they make good progress and thoroughly enjoy learning. By the time they enter Year 1, many have attained the early learning goals in most areas of learning, but aspects of early literacy and numeracy remain slightly lower, despite the good progress.

Children learn, in daily sessions, to identify letters and sounds, and become adept at putting them together to make words and simple sentences. Their vocabulary is increased by many opportunities to develop emergent writing, for example on notes recording children's simple comments on the whole school 'monthly value'. One child's description of 'patience' was 'waiting for the computer'.

Children are confident and happy in this secure and welcoming environment. Their personal, social and emotional skills develop rapidly and behaviour is often excellent. They fully understand the class routines, knowing when 'good sitting', 'good listening' and 'switching on brain-boxes' are required. They settle attentively on the carpet, eagerly counting spots being added and taken away from their classmate dressed up as a ladybird, in line with the 'mini-beasts' topic. Transition between Reception and Year 1 is a positive focus, to ensure a better start in Key Stage 1.

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Planning is good and includes purposeful independent activities across all the areas of learning for the Early Years Foundation Stage, as well as effective adult-led sessions. There is a well-equipped learning environment indoors and immediately outdoors to develop all the skills expected for children of this age. The new leader has introduced new strategies to improve progress. These are already closing the gap between boys' and girls' attainment. The welfare of all children has a similarly high profile to that throughout the school. The excellent partnership with parents and carers extends to home visits and providing a crèche to enable them to be trained to support and guide children in the 'Big Read'.

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

Parents and carers expressed very positive views about the school. All who responded feel their children are kept safe in school. Most are happy with their children's experience, feel their children enjoy school, are helped to have a healthy lifestyle and are prepared well for their future. Several wrote praising the school for its values and the quality of education. There were a very few who expressed more negative views about the regularity of homework, and the degree of notice given to working parents and carers about trips and other events. Inspectors noted these, but considering all the evidence, judged that they did not detract from the excellent opportunities the school provides for parents and carers to communicate and be involved in their children's education.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Andrew's CofE Primary 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 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 206 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	61	28	34	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	57	69	26	31	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	44	53	35	42	1	1	3	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	51	33	40	7	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	47	40	48	2	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	42	40	48	6	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	47	43	52	1	1	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)	35	42	41	49	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	41	45	54	3	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	42	40	48	5	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	41	40	48	4	5	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	39	47	37	45	4	5	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	52	34	41	3	4	3	4

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 all 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



13 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's CofE VA Primary School Northampton NN3 5EN

Thank you very much for being so helpful to my colleagues and me during our visit. It was good to see you all so happy and enjoying your learning. We think St Andrew's is a good school. It has improved a lot since its previous inspection.

Your headteacher and governing body do a good job in running the school. Teaching is good, so you enjoy your lessons and work hard. Your teachers expect all of you to do well, and so you do, particularly in reading, writing, mathematics and computer skills. This prepares you well for work at secondary school. Your behaviour is good and your attendance is excellent. You come to school wanting to learn, and this helps you make the most of your school days.

All the adults take excellent care of you and in turn, you take care of those younger than yourselves, or are new to the school, particularly at lunch and playtimes. You can always talk to an adult if you are worried. You learn how to keep yourself safe and healthy. You have definite opinions about many aspects of your education, which helps your teachers plan how best to teach you. You are very responsible and make an outstanding contribution to the community.

You all get on very well together in school and have good links with the local community and church. Your school has excellent links with your parents and carers. You enjoy getting to know some new friends in Poland, Turkey and Kenya.

There are not very many things that need improving in your school, but in Key Stage 1 you do not do as well as you do in Key Stage 2, so I have asked your teachers to make sure this improves quickly.

I wish you all well in the future and hope that you will keep on working hard, because you enjoy learning so much and want to do well.

Yours sincerely

Carol Worthington

Lead inspector

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