

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115081
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	378999
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Madeleine Gerard

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 of pupils on the school roll	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Bailey
Headteacher	Lelia Berkeley
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons or parts of lessons, taught by seven teachers, and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at work in pupils' books, tracking data showing pupils' attainment and progress, the school's development plans, and policies and records for safeguarding pupils. They considered the 81 responses to the questionnaire received from parents and carers, 95 responses to the questionnaire for pupils in Years 3 to 6, and 14 responses to the staff questionnaire.

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

- Whether rates of learning and progress are consistently rapid in all classes and for all groups of pupils.
- How accurately the school evaluates the quality of its work and secures consistency of provision through the school.
- The extent to which pupils' personal development is a strength of the school.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school with Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in one Reception class. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication needs, or moderate learning difficulties. Almost none of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. There have been a number of staff changes over recent years. The school has achieved several nationally recognised awards including Healthy School Award and the Activemark for physical education.

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 Church of England Primary provides a good quality of education and serves its community well. Accurate self-evaluation has enabled the school to identify key priorities and actions that have enhanced the quality of its work. Leaders, staff and members of the governing body have worked effectively since the last inspection to secure improvements, for example, to the consistency of teaching and assessment systems. Enhancements to the curriculum, such as the development of topic themes that enable pupils to practise their literacy skills across a very wide range of subjects, are helping to raise pupils' attainment. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Opportunities for children to spend time at the school during the summer term before they start and well-established classroom routines ensure they settle quickly and are happy. The use of the outdoor spaces in the Reception class has been improved and children enjoy regular opportunities to develop their learning outside. Pupils make good progress through the rest of the school. Although average overall, attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is rising. In recent assessments, for example, the majority of pupils in Year 6 reached the highest levels in English and mathematics. Together with the school's success in promoting consistently high attendance and maintaining good behaviour, these strengths show the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

Teachers track how well pupils make progress and quickly identify those who need additional support. Teachers' planning uses assessment information well to match work in lessons to pupils' learning needs. Extra help, tailored to pupils' specific needs, ensures all groups of pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and more able pupils, make good progress. Occasionally, the pace of learning is not as consistently brisk when pupils spend too long listening to the teacher. Although marking in pupils' books sometimes makes clear what pupils should do to improve their work, in a small minority of classes, teachers' comments and feedback are less detailed. Some pupils know their individualised targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy, but this is not consistently the case. Pupils are motivated to do well because they enjoy the wide variety of activities that the school organises.

Relationships are warm and positive. The small number of pupils who join the school part way through their primary education make friends and settle quickly because other pupils ensure that they feel welcomed at the school. Pupils' personal and social skills are well promoted. Their awareness of issues related to staying healthy and keeping safe is good. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. For

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example, playground buddies organise games for other pupils during break-time and pupils in Year 6 recently hosted a harvest tea party for local elderly residents.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further in English and mathematics by summer 2012 by ensuring pupils in all classes know what to do to improve and move up to the next level in their work by using marking, feedback and individual pupil targets consistently to make the next steps clear.
- Increase the pace of pupils' learning further by ensuring they are set independent tasks as early as possible in lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Rates of learning and progress through the school, and pupils' overall achievement and enjoyment in their learning are good. Pupils enjoy the tasks they are given. They often set to work quickly and concentrate well. This was illustrated in a mathematics lesson where older pupils were deepening their understanding of three-dimensional shapes. Working sensibly together in groups, pupils thought carefully and discussed their ideas confidently. Pupils were clear about what they were expected to do because they listened attentively to all the teacher's explanations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities made good progress because the work they were given to do was appropriately matched to their needs. They enjoyed working in a group with the teacher. More able pupils were challenged well to build on their knowledge by unfolding a variety of packages and boxes to examine their shape when flat, before matching the flat diagrams to three-dimensional shapes. In a literacy lesson for slightly younger pupils, they became very involved in comparing life during Roman times and today. They thought hard to recall what they had already learned and knew about the Romans. They showed their good social skills by working sensibly together during pair work and made interesting suggestions about which aspects of life they should compare.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are keen to do well. They enjoy opportunities to work with teaching assistants and teachers to boost their literacy and numeracy skills. Higher attaining pupils are motivated by the challenging work teachers set and develop their interests and understanding through workshops organised in partnerships with other local schools.

Positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy are reflected in the high numbers of pupils who walk or cycle to school, the popularity of extra-curricular sports clubs and the school's success in achieving the Activemark and the Healthy School Award. Good awareness of road safety when coming to school on foot or by bicycle, cycling proficiency for pupils in Year 6, and advice on keeping safe when using computers ensure that pupils have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe from

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harm. The school council takes an active role in developing the playground. They are rightly proud of the climbing equipment they have chosen for all pupils to enjoy at break-time and the new outdoor mathematics area. Charity fundraising, celebration of festivals from different cultures and links with local churches support pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Together, pupils' consistently high attendance, good behaviour, well-developed skills in using a wide variety of computer resources, and participation in enterprise projects in Year 6, ensure they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

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	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	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	2
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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage classes successfully and make use of a variety of resources to motivate pupils and engage their interest. They use computers particularly well to explain new concepts clearly and ensure pupils have good opportunities to use information and communication technology in the classroom. Pupils make rapid gains in their learning when teachers plan opportunities for pupils to take an active part in lessons. For example, pupils in Year 3 were working closely together in groups to write persuasive descriptions of various items that they were pretending to put on sale to the rest of the class. Occasionally, the pace of pupils' learning slows when pupils spend time listening to the teachers' explanations before they are set to do independent work in lessons. The school has good systems for tracking and checking the progress pupils make. This information is analysed thoroughly so that any pupils needing additional help are identified quickly and teachers plan suitably challenging tasks for all groups of pupils. However, the quality of marking and individual target

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

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setting is uneven in making specifically clear what pupils need to do to improve their work in order to move up to the next level.

The curriculum is planned to meet all pupils' needs well. The school holds a book week and invites interesting visitors such as authors and African drummers to inspire and motivate learning. Pupils have regular opportunities to write at length in a variety of different styles so that they build up their literacy skills systematically. For example, pupils in Year 6 were writing factual reports about a local river following a guided walk to explore the environment around the river. Well-selected enhancements to the numeracy curriculum ensure mathematics activities reflect pupils' interests. Pupils appreciate regular opportunities to do mathematics tasks in the outside areas, and are keen to contribute to the development of a mathematics activity trail in the playground. Partnerships with external organisations benefit the curriculum well. For example, pupils attend science and multi-sports activities at a local secondary school. Extra-curricular clubs are popular and pupils in Year 6 enthusiastically anticipate the annual residential visit to an activity centre in Norfolk. Good links with parents and carers also support pupils' learning. Curriculum guidance, for example, makes clear to parents and carers what their children will be learning each term. Homework tasks are set, although for older pupils these are often computer-based activities and are not always sharply matched to what pupils are learning each day in school.

Staff play a strong role in supporting pupils' social and emotional development because they know their individual needs and talents well. Staff give additional help for pupils experiencing difficult circumstances and this promotes their learning and well-being effectively. Specialist therapists and well-trained staff work closely with pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. The school supports pupils in preparing to leave the school at the end of Year 6 and ensures that important information is passed on to secondary schools when they move to the next stage in their education. Pupils who may find transition to secondary school difficult receive additional support and guidance.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, staff and members of the governing body work successfully together to ensure all pupils are valued and enjoy themselves in the school's caring and safe environment. The school tackles discrimination and promotes equality well

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so that rates of progress are good for all groups of pupils. All pupils have the chance to participate in activities in and out of school, regardless of their background or ability. Leaders and managers embed ambition well and successfully secure improvements in key aspects of the school's work, for example by increasing opportunities for pupils to use computers in a wide variety of subjects, and by enhancing the use of assessment information to match work to pupils' needs in lessons. Through regular monitoring of teaching and pupils' learning, the school's leaders have managed the many changes in staff well and secured good quality provision. The governing body knows the school well and fulfils its statutory duties effectively. Procedures to safeguard pupils' health, safety and welfare are good. Staff receive regular training and the school site is safe and well-maintained. Occasionally, some monitoring of documentation is less consistently rigorous. There are good relationships between different groups of pupils and differences are respected because community cohesion is promoted well. This ensures the school is a happy community. Pupils have a good understanding of the lives of people in a variety of communities although occasionally, opportunities are missed to enhance pupils' understanding of contrasting communities further.

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	2
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

Staff work successfully to establish an environment where children develop good personal and social skills, and grow in confidence. Staff effectively establish routines that quickly develop children's sense of responsibility and independence. For example, they register themselves present when they arrive in the morning and indicate whether they are having a packed lunch, light lunch or hot school dinner. They also select their favourite pieces of work and stick them into their topic books themselves. Children work and play well together. They take turns and share

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resources readily. For example, children in the Reception class were observed in the outside area inventing their own counting game together and throwing bean-bags to practise their numeracy skills. There is an appropriate balance of adult-led activities and opportunities for children to select tasks for themselves. Children in the outdoor copse were practising their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make by looking for plastic letters hidden among the trees and using them to form simple words. In the inside area, a group of children working with another adult were writing simple sentences describing an autumn picture they had drawn. Children make good progress in the Reception class. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed, and detailed records of observations of children's learning and progress are kept. Occasionally, however, the planning of activities for children to choose for themselves does not use assessment information rigorously to ensure that they are challenged to make even faster progress.

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

A larger-than-average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. In the survey, the very large majority of parents and carers confirm that their children enjoy their time at school and are confident that the school keeps them safe. Most evaluate the quality of the school's work to develop pupils' personal skills positively and feel that the quality of teaching is good. A few do not agree that their children are making enough progress at the school. Another very small minority do not agree that the school meets their child's particular needs and a further few also do not agree that behaviour is dealt with well at the school. Inspectors found teaching and rates of learning and progress for all groups of pupils to be good. Inspection findings show that pupils' behaviour is good and that teachers manage classrooms well. Although a few parents and carers felt that the school could do more to take account of their comments and suggestions, another few made a point of writing to express their appreciation for the way the school has responded to their concerns. While the inspection found that the school keeps parents and carers appropriately informed, for example regarding changes of staff, the school does not yet have completely effective systems that ensure all parents and carers feel confident that their concerns are addressed.

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 Controlled 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 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 166 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	58	30	37	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	44	54	32	40	1	1	4	5
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	38	41	51	4	5	5	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	41	37	46	9	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	40	49	34	42	6	7	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	43	34	42	7	9	3	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	43	36	44	8	10	2	2
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)	37	46	33	41	3	4	4	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	41	31	38	9	11	5	6
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	35	42	52	5	6	6	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	40	32	40	9	11	5	6
The school is led and managed effectively	37	46	32	40	6	7	5	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	53	28	35	8	10	1	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



20 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Colchester, CO6 1HL

Thank you very much for your friendly welcome and for helping the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you all very much, and listening to what you had to say. We were pleased to see how you are developing the school playground and particularly liked the woven willow boat you are growing. This letter is to tell you about the judgements that we reached.

St Andrews is a good school. The youngest children get off to a good start in the Reception class. You make good progress in your learning in Years 1 to 6. You reach the same standards as most other pupils nationally by the end of Year 6 and although standards are rising, we would like them to be even higher. Those of you who need extra help are well supported so that you make good progress. You attend school very regularly and your behaviour is good. You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves fit, healthy and safe. Teaching is good and the staff make regular checks on how well you are making progress. All the adults work together as a team to make sure you are well cared for.

To help you do even better, we would like the teachers to set you tasks to do on your own, or in small groups, as early as possible in lessons. We have also asked the teachers to give you written advice and feedback whenever they mark your work, so that you know what to do to make it even better. We would like the staff to make sure that each of you knows your individual targets for literacy and numeracy to help you to improve and move up to the next level even faster. All of you can help by reading your teachers' comments, remembering your targets and regularly checking for yourselves that you are meeting them. All of you can also help further by continuing to attend school very regularly and on time.

Finally, I would like to thank you again and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Madeleine Gerard
Lead inspector

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