

St Andrew's CofE Primary School and Nursery

Tower Hill, Much Hadham, Hertfordshire, SG10 6DL

Inspection dates 12–13 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Because teaching has improved and learning is carefully monitored, the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress is rising.
- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides passionate and determined leadership. Regular checks on teaching and creative approaches to developing its quality mean that it is almost all securely good and an increasing amount is outstanding.
- Reading is effectively taught throughout the school. Pupils are immersed in literature at all ages. They read well because of the excellent start they make in phonics (the linking of sounds and letters) and understanding stories. This is built on carefully in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils work hard in lessons and are well mannered and polite around school. They say they feel safe because of the trust they have in the adults who work at this caring and reflective school.
- Children make good or outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because staff work together well to nurture them and to provide enriching learning activities.
- Developments in the teaching of mathematics have improved pupils' calculation skills. They use these well to solve challenging problems.
- Governance is a strength. Governors understand the school's data well and use their knowledge to ensure effective targeting of resources to bring about improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils act on the advice they receive from the marking of their work.
- In some lessons pupils, particularly the most-able, are not effectively challenged to make the rapid progress they are capable of.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited parts of 22 lessons and observed 11 teachers. Seven observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils to discuss their learning and spoke to pupils informally at playtime and in the dining hall. They heard pupils read and scrutinised their work.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, four members of the governing body and the local authority improvement partner.
- Inspectors took account of the 90 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View), of 37 letters from parents sent in to the team. They spoke to parents informally as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors took account of 16 responses to questionnaires completed by staff.
- School assessment data, self-evaluation and monitoring information, procedures for teachers' performance management and the school's improvement plans were scrutinised.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were scrutinised.

Inspection team

Prue Rayner, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jane Richmond

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary and nursery school.
- Most of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are all below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The school manages a breakfast club for a small number of its pupils.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to match the quality of the best so that it is equally effective in all year groups by:
 - making sure teachers provide enough challenge for all pupils and particularly the most-able, in all classes
 - improving marking to match the quality of the best and ensuring pupils act on the advice they are given and improve their work
 - ensuring all teachers draw upon the effective and often innovative approaches that are being developed by several teachers, particularly those who have recently been appointed.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start the Nursery with skills and abilities that are typical for their age although the range is broad; some have more developed understanding and a few have very specific learning needs. All pupils make outstanding progress in the Nursery and good progress continues in the Reception class. This means that children are very well prepared to start Key Stage 1 with skills and abilities that are above those expected for their age.
- Good progress continues in Key Stage 1. The proportion of pupils in Year 1 meeting and exceeding expectations in the phonics screening check is high because early teaching is good and often outstanding. This enables all pupils to do particularly well in reading and writing. Pupils learn and use strategies to read unfamiliar words, such as sounding out letters or breaking up longer words well.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is very high in reading. It is above the national average in writing and broadly average in mathematics. Assessment information held on pupils currently in the school shows that they are making faster progress in mathematics and are on track to achieve well above national averages in all three subjects. This is the direct result of improvements that have been made in teaching.
- Historically, at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have attained above average outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment overall at the end of Key Stage 2 fell in 2012 but actions taken to improve teaching have addressed this and, in 2013, overall attainment was the highest it has been in the past five years.
- The progress made by pupils has not been quite as marked as their improvements in attainment. The proportions of pupils making better than expected progress are a little behind the national picture in reading and mathematics. The high levels of attainment have masked the fact that some pupils could have made greater progress.
- New systems to monitor progress and consequent actions have been effective and assessment information shows that pupils currently in the school are now making much faster progress than they were.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. They are making better progress because the provision has been re-organised. Specialised support is more specifically targeted and class teachers are taking greater responsibility for these pupils' work on a day to day basis.
- There were too few pupils who were eligible for the pupil premium leaving Year 6 in 2013 to make a secure judgement of their attainment in English and mathematics; there is too great a risk that individuals could be identified. Other pupils in this group across the school make similar to and sometimes better progress than their classmates. The school has spent these funds on providing additional classroom support and better resources for learning, and these have helped build their self-confidence and improve their attainment.
- Pupils are thoroughly immersed in literature, from the youngest age, they talk knowledgeably about stories, books and authors they enjoy. The teaching of phonics and of more complex reading and spelling strategies is very good. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils read and write in depth. The presentation of their work is exemplary.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching has been improved and energised by new appointments to the school. Teachers plan and teach together and are continually improving as a result of training, mentoring and feedback from colleagues and managers; pupils are more frequently given activities that hold their interest and make them think carefully.
- Pupils learn well when teachers set work that is challenging and interesting for all groups of pupils. As a result they work very hard to find solutions and answers to the problems they are set and make very good progress. For example in a Year 4 science lesson, pupils worked with huge enthusiasm and concentration to investigate ways to separate different solids. The task ensured they could and did make excellent progress and they developed innovative approaches to sharing their findings. Teachers skilfully drew on these outcomes in discussion with pupils so that they could plan their next steps in learning.
- In the majority of lessons all pupils work very hard and are clear about what they are being asked to do and why. Pupils know what to do if they get stuck and try to resolve difficulties for themselves before asking their friends or their teacher for help. Throughout the school, they develop good learning habits which prepare them very well for the next stage in their education.
- Where learning is not so rapid, the work given to the most-able pupils does not always allow them to develop their own ideas and complete work to a high enough standard. Occasionally, activities inhibit the amount of progress pupils make because they are too limited and do not allow pupils to push on and extend the depth and breadth of their learning sufficiently.
- Teaching in the Nursery is outstanding. Staff plan exciting activities indoors and outside through which the children learn rapidly. Thorough team planning ensures good provision continues in Reception. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff are very caring and attentive and ensure that children have just the support they need to do well.
- Because senior leaders' expectations are very high, teachers now frequently and accurately check on pupils' progress. In the best examples, they mark pupils' work regularly, ensure pupils act on their advice and use all of this information to set work that challenges pupils to do their very best. In a few lessons, teachers' practice in these respects is not as good as it needs to be and as it is elsewhere in the school.
- The extra support given in small groups or one-to-one sessions for pupils eligible for the pupils premium is effective in accelerating learning at all levels. Because the special educational needs co-ordinator has implemented new strategies for teaching pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs, they are making improved progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good and they are unfailingly polite and well-mannered. They express great pride in their school and in the wide range of their academic, sporting and musical accomplishments. As one pupil said 'we love our school, we hope you love it too'.
- Pupils work hard and enjoy lessons, they show commitment to their learning. They trust their teachers and work in strong learning partnerships with them although they occasionally become frustrated when work is not planned well enough to make tasks interesting and challenging. Pupils work well on their own and together, they readily help each other and pursue any

investigative activities they are given with great enthusiasm.

- Pupils are given frequent opportunities to reflect on their values, consider their attitudes and discuss their beliefs. Moments of spiritual reflection are moving and are clearly common occurrences. For example in a Year 6 lesson, pupils studied Roald Dahl's perceptions of starting boarding school. In the class collective worship activity that followed, they explored their own excitements and fears about moving on to secondary school and joined in prayer or reflection for support to address them.
- Pupils' views are valued and are sought to inform school development. They contribute ideas and perspectives on school priorities through the work of the school council. Most recently, they have worked with the deputy headteacher to identify some key areas of learning in mathematics they think could be improved.
- Attendance is high and rigorous procedures are in place to address instances of unauthorised absence. The school works closely with parents where attendance falls below the levels expected.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know how to keep safe when using the internet, they understand road safety and know why they learn about different sorts of friendships. They do not fully understand that there are different types of bullying but do know that if any incidents occur in school they are dealt with appropriately.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher works with energy and great passion to ensure every pupil enjoys and benefits from the wide range of opportunities offered. Ably supported by committed governors and the deputy headteacher, she has ensured the progress of every pupil is tracked in detail and action is taken if any fall behind the increasingly high expectations that are now set. Because middle leaders are well supported to develop their roles, they are starting to give more specific guidance to colleagues and this is making a difference to how well pupils learn in different subjects.
- Leaders at all levels are continually improving the quality of teaching through regular and careful monitoring which results in well-planned whole-school and individual training. Effective strategies are used to support teachers to improve their work; however, in some instances this has not yet resulted in teaching being as consistently good as it is at its best.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to learn about different topics and themes, both in lessons, assemblies and special events. There is a wide range of additional opportunities to develop their expertise in other subjects, including lively specialist music teaching for all classes. Pupils and teachers benefit from the expertise in physical education made available through the primary school sport funding because all are developing more specific sporting skills. Pupils show huge enthusiasm for competitions with other schools, they enjoy these opportunities and succeed well. The very effective links made between sports teaching and personal, health and social education means they develop good understanding of the benefits of exercise on their health.
- Parents spoken to recognise the increased progress their children are making at school because of the strong leadership team now in place. A large number of parents also took the opportunity to write to inspectors regarding the quality of experience their children receive which they regard as exceptional. They are confident their children are very happy and are individually nurtured to develop the academic and social confidence they need to succeed well.

- The current local authority adviser has provided significant challenge to the school to help it to improve pupils' progress. School leaders have engaged with this positively and the headteacher ensures adviser support is targeted effectively. Most recently, specialist support has helped introduce improvements in teaching and learning in mathematics.

- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is a strength of the school. When the previous headteacher retired, governors showed resilience and determination in making the right new appointment to replace her. They work in very strong partnership with the headteacher and share her passion for the school to ensure every pupil achieves their best.
 - Governors understand exactly how well the school is performing because they monitor its work effectively through regular visits, review of data and attendance at meetings with the school improvement partner. They participate actively and frequently in the life of the school which enables them to have an even more detailed knowledge of how effective all aspects of its work are.
 - Governors have reviewed performance management procedures with the headteacher and are ensuring that all teachers are paid at the appropriate rate for their performance. They know how well teaching and the activities pupils undertake impact on their achievement. They have a good understanding of what the pupil premium funds are spent on and the impact this has on pupils' well-being and progress.
 - Minutes of governing body meetings show that they provide knowledgeable challenge to school leaders about the school's performance; they ensure the school meets statutory requirements for safeguarding and finance.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	117444
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	440554

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary and Nursery
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lindsay Steel
Headteacher	Mrs Judy King
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2010
Telephone number	01279 842626
Fax number	01279 841070
Email address	admin@standrews236.herts.sch.uk

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