

St Andrew's Church School

Grove Terrace, Taunton, TA2 6HA

Inspection dates 6–7 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Early years provision	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- St Andrew's is an improving school. Leaders and managers, including the local governing body and the Multi-Academy Trust, are working together effectively. As a result, standards are rising and teaching is improving.
- Pupils make good progress and reach average standards by the time they leave in Year 6.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use effectively to ask questions to check pupils' understanding.
- Teachers have high expectations. They plan interesting activities that help pupils to develop good attitudes to learning.
- Children in the early year's provision thrive. All adults know the needs of the children well. They make sure that the activities children have help them to make at least good progress across all the areas of their learning.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for the least able and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs.
- Pupils enjoy school. They show high levels of respect for each other and for all adults in school.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe. Their parents and teachers agree.
- Pupils' personal development has high priority. They have many opportunities to shine through music, sport and through taking on responsibilities within the school.
- The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength of the school. As a result, pupils grow into caring and sensitive young people.
- Leaders know what to do to make the school even better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils do not achieve as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with clear advice on how to improve.
- Pupils do not use their knowledge of sounds and letters (phonics) to spell unfamiliar words.
- Teachers do not always find interesting ways for pupils to practise and improve their writing skills across all subjects.
- Pupils do not consistently show a fluent and efficient handwriting style.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons and parts of lessons, some of them jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Discussions took place with the headteacher, other leaders in school, members of the local governing body, representatives of the Trust and with parents and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 49 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and one letter from a parent received during the inspection. They also discussed the views of parents through informal conversations in school.
- Inspectors considered school leaders' views on the quality of the school's work and their plans for school improvement, as well as gathering information about pupils' progress. They looked at teachers' planning, pupils' work, documentation about safeguarding procedures and samples of the targets teachers receive to improve their performance.
- The inspection team analysed the 25 questionnaires completed by the staff.

Inspection team

Jeanne Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- St Andrew's Church School converted to become an academy in September 2013. The school is a member of the Bath and Wells Multi-Academy Trust. When its predecessor school, St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Pupils in the early year's provision and Key Stage 1 are taught in mixed-age classes. There are separate classes for each year group in Key Stage 2.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after) is lower than average.
- Most of the pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- Children in the Reception class all attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing by:
 - ensuring that pupils form letters correctly and develop efficient pencil control
 - helping pupils to apply their understanding of the sounds letters make when they spell unfamiliar words
 - making sure that the comments teachers write when they mark pupils' work are always helpful in telling them how to improve
 - finding interesting ways for pupils to develop their writing skills across all the subjects they learn.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- All leaders and managers show a determined drive to make the school even more effective. Through the partnership they have with the local governing body and the Academy Trust, they are taking effective actions to continue the school's improvement journey. However, leadership and management are not outstanding because leaders have not yet ensured that pupils make rapid progress in writing.
- Teachers value the training they have to improve their skills. They know the school's priorities as well as how they can improve their own teaching. They regularly share their good practice with other schools in the Trust and in the wider local area. They value the way they also have chances to learn from others. They say that the targets they have to improve their performance help them to get better. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving.
- Teachers who lead subjects are effective. They know what is going well and what can improve because they make regular checks on the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making. They use their expertise to support their colleagues when necessary.
- The school's values, which aim to enable pupils to become sensitive, caring and aspiring young people, are effectively promoted through the high quality displays around the school. The displays also show the importance the school places on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is strength of the school. Their work in art, their thoughts and feelings about important world issues, the achievement board, their study of world religions and the cups and shields they have won are evidence of how their personal development is encouraged. During the inspection, the oldest pupils demonstrated their excellence in music in an impressive performance of African drumming.
- The subjects pupils learn are organised in a way which helps pupils to see the links between different areas of their learning. British values are woven throughout pupils' learning and the other activities they do, such as on the school council. The wide range of experiences from visits, visitors and artefacts brings learning alive. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy school.
- Additional funding, including the pupil premium, is spent carefully and leaders check that it is making a difference to pupils' achievement and to their well-being. As a result, the gaps between the attainment of pupils who receive funding and their classmates are closing rapidly. Leaders' actions demonstrate their commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.
- Leaders are aiming to gain the gold kite mark for the quality of physical education and are using the additional funding for primary sport to achieve their goal. There is a wide range of sporting activities available for pupils to enjoy, both during the school day and in after-school clubs. Pupils in Year 6 are able to experience sailing. Pupils of all ages with particular talents are reaching even higher standards through the extra opportunities they have. Teachers are also developing their skills through a sports partnership so that they can continue to help pupils in the future.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. They say that any concerns, however large or small, are taken seriously and are dealt with. All those who responded on Parent View would recommend the school to others.
- The school's systems for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Leaders are assiduous in making sure that all teachers have the training they need so that they know exactly what to do if they are worried about a child's welfare.
- The Multi-Academy Trust is providing high quality support and challenge. Members of the Trust have an accurate understanding of the effectiveness of the school and are actively and effectively involved in supporting future developments.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The local governing body has welcomed the additional support and challenge that the Multi-Academy Trust is providing. Governors recognise that they are now much more effective than in the past. They have an accurate understanding of what information about achievement is telling them about the effectiveness of the school compared with others. They make regular visits to school and they check that the information they have from the headteacher is accurate. They seek explanations from leaders if progress slows and they do not give up until they are reassured that the right actions are being taken. They know that the quality of teaching is good and that the targets set for teachers to improve their performance are supporting improvements further. They make sure that underperformance is challenged and that effective teachers are rewarded by progression through the pay scale.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Around the school they are consistently polite to each other and to all adults. They look after the school and they usually take pride in their work. A large majority of staff and parents say that behaviour is good.
- In lessons there is very little time lost due to low-level disruption. Teachers usually only need to give gentle reminders to encourage pupils to concentrate on their work.
- While pupils enjoy their learning, they do not display a thirst for knowledge and a drive to reach the highest possible standards which is why behaviour is good and not outstanding.
- In the playground pupils of all ages play together well. The older pupils enjoy their roles as play leaders and as a source of help to sort out minor disagreements. Parents and pupils are pleased that part of the school ground is being developed to improve the play space available.
- Pupils are aware of the different kinds of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say that incidents are almost unheard of. They know that they can always rely on adults to sort out any worries they have about other pupils' behaviour, including any bullying.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school is vigilant in making sure that pupils are safe at all times. Leaders make regular checks on the safety of pupils at all times, including on the trips to the off-site Forest School.
- Pupils are highly aware of how to keep themselves and others safe. They actively check that younger pupils are safe in the playground and they show high levels of awareness of safety issues. This awareness starts with the children in the Reception class who know they need to wear a helmet when they are riding a bike in the outdoor area.
- Pupils understand how to use the internet safely and the actions they should take if they ever feel unsafe. They learn about the good and bad effects of different drugs as well as about road safety and stranger danger.
- The nurturing environment helps pupils to feel safe and secure which has a very positive effect on the progress they make.
- Attendance has risen and is above the national average. The school makes immediate checks on pupils who are absent from school and effective actions are taken if there are any concerns about a pupil's welfare or safety.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Pupils are enthusiastic learners because teachers find ways to make lessons enjoyable. Teachers are enthusiastic and they inspire pupils to share their enthusiasm. They find interesting ways of sharing new knowledge and interesting work for the pupils to do.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They are confident to use their knowledge to ask probing questions to check that pupils understand the new learning. They use pupils' answers to decide whether they need to explain again or whether they can challenge the pupils further. This helps pupils to make good progress in lessons.
- Teachers have high expectations for pupils of all abilities. The most able have work which stretches them. They often set challenges for themselves, giving them a chance to show how high they can go as well as giving them a sense of achievement.
- Pupils make good progress because they understand what they are expected to learn by the end of the lesson and the steps they need to take to be successful. They often check for themselves how well they are doing and they let the teacher know if they are finding the work too easy or too difficult.
- Pupils say that the comments teachers write when they mark their books help them to know how well they have done and what they need to do next. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes the comments lack detail and the pupils do not always apply the advice they are given, which limits the progress they could make.
- Teaching assistants support learning well, particularly for the least able. The questions they ask help them to find out the barriers pupils are facing. They are unobtrusive so that they do not interrupt the learning of the rest of the class. Their explanations are clear so that pupils can move on in their learning.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They understand how to use their understanding of phonics to build unfamiliar words, though they do not always apply their understanding to spell words when they are writing. Pupils enjoy selecting books from the library and they read frequently at home and in school.

- The changes that leaders have made to the teaching of writing are resulting in much better progress than previously. Pupils learn how to punctuate correctly and how to enrich their writing through adding more detail. They often write at length to practise their skills. However, teachers do not always capitalise on opportunities to apply their learning across the work they do in other subjects. Sometimes their progress is held back because they do not form their letters correctly or hold their pencils in ways which help them to develop a fluent style.
- In mathematics, teachers build pupils' skills and understanding carefully. They check that pupils understand before they move on. This gives pupils a firm foundation on which they can build their mathematical understanding. Teachers make sure that pupils can succeed both through support from adults and through equipment or apparatus they provide. Pupils can manipulate numbers and they can apply their understanding to solve problems and to carry out investigations with confidence.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress during their time in St Andrew's. When pupils leave in Year 6, the standards they reach are broadly in line with the national average. As a result they are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Progress is speeding up, particularly over the last year. Pupils are now making better progress and the work in their books shows that standards are higher than in the past. More pupils are on track to reach both the expected levels and the higher levels than at this time last year.
- During their time in Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress. At the end of Year 2 their standards are broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils use their understanding of phonics to read unfamiliar words when they read. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected level in the national reading check at the end of Year 1 has risen, and is now slightly above national average.
- Pupils make good and sometimes rapid progress during Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics. The attainment of pupils in Year 6 who left the school in 2014 was broadly in line with the national average. This represents good progress from standards which were well below average when the pupils left Year 2. However, pupils do not make as much progress in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils who receive additional funding often make better progress than their classmates. All disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 who left the school in 2014 made at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. A high proportion made better than expected progress in reading and mathematics. As a result, the gap between their attainment and that of their classmates has closed in these two subjects, though they were about a term behind in writing. Their standards were in line with other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics and about a year behind in writing.
- The most able pupils make good progress, particularly in mathematics. More pupils reach the higher levels at the end of Year 6 than when the same pupils were in Year 2. The proportion that reached the higher levels at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was in line with the national average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing.
- Pupils who start to fall behind are spotted quickly. The support they receive helps them to catch up quickly. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs often have special plans which help their parents to know how to support them at home, alongside the help they have in school. This partnership approach helps them to catch up and some pupils are doing better than their classmates. Parents are pleased with the progress their children are making. Some pupils with specific difficulties make exceptional progress from their starting points.

The early years provision is good

- Parents who spoke to inspectors during the inspection were unreservedly positive about the way their children had developed during the year. They said that this was because of the care the adults took to get to know their children and the way the school has worked in partnership with them throughout the year.
- The quality of teaching is good. The learning areas, both indoors and outdoors, create a bright, positive and stimulating environment. Adults organise experiences which draw children into learning and keep them engrossed for extended periods of time. The children are so absorbed in the activities that they do not realise how much they are learning. All adults observe the children closely and the questions they ask help the children to think at a deeper level. As a result, they make good and sometimes rapid progress.
- Children are very safe. All adults make sure that children are aware of how to manage their behaviour and to consider others. The nurturing environment contributes strongly to the progress children make.

- By the time they leave the early years provision, the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development is broadly average. This represents good progress from their starting points because their skills when they start school are below, and sometimes well below, those typically found for their age. Children who are behind when they start are given effective help to catch up. However, while they make rapid progress in reading, their skills in writing remain below other areas of their learning which is why the early year's provision is good and not outstanding.
- Leadership of the early year's provision is good. The early year's leader knows how to help young children to learn well and she shares her expertise within the Trust schools and in the wider school community. She knows the strengths within the school and the areas which could be even better. She is aware of the need to raise standards in writing and she is making sure that children regularly practise their writing skills in order to help them make faster progress.

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	140062
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	450360

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The local governing body
Chair	Steve Hubbard
Headteacher	Paul Sheehan
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01823 275906
Fax number	01823 325634
Email address	office@standrewsbwmat.org

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