

St Andrew's CofE Aided Primary School

Townfield Road, Lower Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside CH63 7NL

Inspection dates 1–2 March 2016

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, supported well by other senior staff, leads the school with determination and ambition. Every avenue is explored in her quest to continually seek improvements.
- Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. The very high standards that pupils reach in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school have been sustained for the past several years.
- Pupils relish the challenging work that their teachers give them. Classrooms are a hive of learning and, as a result, all groups of pupils make very strong progress.
- Leaders develop the talents of new teachers very well. They recognise that even more could be done to share the outstanding practice of experienced colleagues with them.
- A rich and diverse curriculum develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding very well.
- Outstanding teaching in the early years ensures that children make an excellent start to their learning, developing the strong foundations that are built upon as they move through the school.
- The school's ethos of care, consideration, courtesy and Christian values permeates all aspects of its life.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make very strong progress. In 2015 they achieved standards that were above other pupils nationally.
- Leaders listen carefully and act on the views of pupils. Consequently, pupils play a key role in helping to improve aspects of the school such as behaviour and the quality of the environment.
- Governors are ambitious for the pupils of the school. They are highly effective and hold leaders to account through robust challenge.
- The teaching of mathematics is a significant strength of the school. Pupils have a deep understanding of mathematical ideas and apply their learning to solve complex problems. Many pupils say that mathematics is their favourite subject.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and is a significant factor in the outstanding progress that they make.
- Pupils are kept safe in school. Leaders ensure that all policies and procedures are robust and understood by all.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the use of the outstanding skills of experienced teachers to support the development of teachers at the start of their career.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher's unwavering pursuit of excellence has resulted in consistently high-calibre teaching across the school. Consequently, pupils shine, reaching standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are significantly above the national average by the time they leave the school.
- Senior leaders and governors have successfully cultivated a culture where striving for improvement is the norm. From the Reception Class to Year 6, the school exudes ambition. No one is prepared to accept the status quo.
- Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the school exceptionally well. Identified issues are robustly tackled before they become a serious concern. For example, a minor dip in the standards that pupils reached in the spelling, punctuation and grammar test in 2015 has been rapidly seized upon and addressed.
- The headteacher and subject leaders keep a close check on the quality of teaching. They use their findings to plan training that supports teachers to improve their practice further. Subject leaders use their own expertise very effectively, including by modelling lessons and coaching colleagues. The support and guidance for teachers new to the profession is effective. Nonetheless, the outstanding practice of experienced teachers is not fully exploited by giving opportunities for colleagues to observe a broad range of lessons.
- Middle leaders play a significant role in school improvement. The mathematics subject leader, for instance, has this year introduced substantial changes to how mathematics is taught across the school. The greater emphasis on problem solving and developing pupils' mathematical understanding has been embraced by teachers. As a result, the high standards that pupils already achieve are being further and rapidly improved.
- A rich and diverse curriculum contributes to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding very effectively. Year 6 pupils, for example, linked their work on the current migration news story to Article 15 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights during a topic titled 'Are we all born universally equal and free?'
- The arts are given prominence in the curriculum. Pupils learn musical instruments and play in the school orchestra during concerts in the spring and summer term. Pupils are proud to be members of the school choir and spoke to inspectors with excitement about their forthcoming participation in a singing event at Chester Cathedral.
- The headteacher ensures that pupil premium funding is used very effectively. The impact of this funding is meticulously tracked to ensure that it is making a positive difference. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make progress that is at least in line with other pupils nationally.
- Sports funding is equally well utilised. Specialist teachers from the local secondary school deliver high-quality physical education lessons. Their expertise is used well to enhance the skills of non-specialist teachers. A wide range of extra-curricular sporting clubs, such as dance and basketball, have been successful in raising the numbers of pupils taking part in sporting activities. Pupils take part in a number of inter-school competitions. The school football team, for example, were recently crowned joint champions in a local event.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well led. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored and teaching and support inside and outside of the classroom are tailored to ensure that their needs are fully met. A significant number of parents who responded to Parent View (the Ofsted online parental questionnaire) praised the school for the impact of the actions to support the additional needs of their children.
- The fundamental British values of respect and tolerance are developed very well. Pupils learn about other faiths such as Judaism and Islam and are able to engage in mature discussions about the similarities and differences in people's beliefs, listening respectfully to the opinions of others. As one parent stated, 'St Andrew's has nurtured our children into becoming responsible citizens, developing values of respect and kindness to all, in school and beyond in the wider community'. This affirmation was typical of the views expressed by parents.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors share the determination and ambition of the headteacher to provide an outstanding education for the pupils at St Andrew's. They are diligent and proactive in gathering and analysing a broad range of information, including the views of parents and pupils. As a result, they have a

comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, which enables them to effectively undertake their role of holding leaders to account for the impact of their actions.

- Governors, alongside the headteacher, manage the finances of the school prudently. Decisions on how funding should be best spent to secure the greatest value are taken with care. This year, for example, the safety of pupils has been further improved through the installation of a new entrance gate and fencing.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Parents and pupils are overwhelmingly positive in their view that children are kept safe at St Andrew’s. As one parent commented, ‘the school has strong leadership and we are confident that our children are safe and well looked after.’ Policies and procedures are kept fully up to date and are reviewed regularly by the governing body. Governors take seriously their role to safeguard pupils. As a governor stated, ‘keeping pupils safe is the most important job that we do.’ Governors ensure that leaders undertake the necessary checks on adults to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils and include challenging safeguarding questions when interviewing candidates for jobs within the school. Furthermore, governors seek the views of parents to understand how they can further improve this aspect of the school’s work. For example, the results of a recent questionnaire about e-safety are being analysed to review how the school can improve pupils’ safety when they are online at school and at home.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- During discussions with inspectors, pupils stated that they enjoy their learning greatly. Many pupils talked with enthusiasm about the challenges that they tackle in mathematics and the opportunities that they have to write. One pupil, for instance, said that she ‘loved maths’ as getting questions wrong sometimes helped her to learn more than getting answers correct all of the time.
- The teaching and learning of mathematics are significant strengths of the school. Pupils cherish the opportunities, in almost every lesson, which they are given to explore different methods to solve captivating problems. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils deepened their mathematical understanding excellently when challenged to help the school office calculate how many pupils are in Key Stage 1.
- The teaching of writing across the school is of an equally high quality. Teachers plan lessons that build incrementally on pupils’ understanding from previous learning. Pupils are inspired by high-quality reading books and the use of drama activities to write in a range of different genres. In Year 3, pupils produced high-quality descriptive writing based on the book *Leon and The Place Between*, following a drama lesson taught by a specialist teacher.
- Leaders use teachers with specialist skills to very good effect to enhance the quality of learning in subjects such as music and physical education. Learning moved forward strongly in a physical education lesson when Year 5 pupils made good links in their learning between science and physical activity during a dance lesson, led by a specialist teacher from St John Plessington Catholic College.
- The feedback that most teachers give to pupils during lessons is razor-sharp, helping to move learning forward rapidly and address any misunderstandings. Furthermore, teachers listen carefully to pupils’ responses and shape their lessons to extend learning further. In a Year 6 lesson, for instance, pupils reflected on the effect of changing the position of an adverbial phrase in a sentence following a question posed by a pupil. As a consequence, learning was deepened very effectively.
- Teachers’ excellent use of probing questions is a significant factor in the strong progress that pupils make. They ask pupils to justify their thinking and explain their answers in detail. As a consequence, pupils think deeply about solutions to problems, reasoning skills are enhanced and confidence is high.
- High expectations for every pupil are evident in each classroom of the school. Teachers plan lessons that meet the needs of all groups of pupils and provide a high level of challenge. This is particularly evident in mathematics, where carefully planned investigations and problem-solving activities allow pupils to deepen and broaden their learning at a level appropriate to their ability.
- High-quality teaching in the early years plays a significant role in the progress that pupils make as they move through the school. The consistent approach, to the teaching of phonics for example, means that pupils hit the ground running in Key Stage 1 and learning is effectively built upon.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils value their learning and are happy to attend St Andrew's; they wear their uniform with a sense of pride.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors and almost all of those who responded to Parent View (the online Ofsted questionnaire) have a positive view of how effectively the school promotes pupils' personal development. One comment, typical of many, stated, 'I have watched my children blossom and thrive at this school. It has made a fundamental contribution to my children's development.'
- Pupils are proud of the contributions that they make to the school. Pupils who are members of the 'worship committee' explained passionately to inspectors how they have helped pupils across the school understand the value of humility, by planning and presenting their own school assembly.
- Leaders listen to and act upon pupils' views about the school, ensuring that they play a key role in school improvement. Leaders of the School Election Parties have been able to fulfil their election pledges of providing new goal posts in the playground, ensuring that there is a greater choice of food at lunchtimes and having a new adventure trail installed in the playground.
- Pupil sports ambassadors help to ensure that pupils know how to make healthy choices. A number of pupils, for example, designed a booklet featuring '10 St Andrew's Sporting Goals to Reach Before You Are 11' for pupils to record their achievements in areas such as 'introduce a friend to an after-school club'. Furthermore, junior pupils have established and independently run a healthy tuck shop where they sell fruit at breaktimes.
- Those pupils who spoke to inspectors state that bullying is not tolerated at their school and that incidents are very rare. Records of bullying, held by the school, show that any incidents are dealt with appropriately and are followed up effectively. Worry boxes are checked regularly and further ensure that pupils' concerns are addressed promptly.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, particularly when online. Key Stage 2 pupils have designed their own posters, displayed in the computer room, giving their 'top ten tips for staying safe on the internet' to promote this message across the school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school values of care, consideration, courtesy and Christian values underpin the high expectations of behaviour across the school. Pupils clearly articulate what these values mean to them and how their behaviour is influenced positively.
- Pupils listen attentively and respond respectfully to adults across the school, and are positive role models. Behaviour in classrooms is excellent. Pupils work well with their peers, collaborating with purpose, and listening to the views of others respectfully. In many classes, this aspect of pupils' behaviour is a significant factor in the strong progress that they make.
- Behaviour elsewhere throughout the school is equally strong. Pupils are polite and respectful, holding doors open for one another and waiting their turn on outdoor play equipment.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and, as a consequence, overall attendance is in line with that seen nationally. Leaders have taken robust and effective action to tackle the increase in the number of pupils who were regularly absent from school that was seen in 2015.

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding

- Leaders' consistent focus on ensuring the highest-quality teaching across the school results in pupils achieving standards in reading, writing and mathematics that have been significantly above the national average, by the time pupils leave Year 6, for the past several years. As a consequence, pupils are very well prepared to face the rigours of the next stage of their education.
- The very strong teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), from the Reception Class onwards, means that pupils' phonic skills are excellent. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils applied their learning of the 'ire' sound to their writing, spelling words such as 'bonfire' correctly. As a consequence, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening test has improved for the past two years and was substantially above the national average in 2015.
- Pupils' books, lesson observations and the school's own assessment information show that pupils make significant progress across Key Stage 1. In Year 2 mathematics books, for example, pupils' methods for

solving a wide range of problems show an increasing sophistication over time and provide evidence of their deep mathematical understanding. By the time pupils leave Key Stage 1, they are well positioned to build upon the solid foundations of their learning.

- The standard of pupils' writing across the school is excellent. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught well, ensuring that pupils are able to apply these skills to their writing effectively. Through analysing a broad range of texts, pupils know what successful writing looks like and use this knowledge to plan their own high-quality writing across a range of other subjects. They confidently use descriptive language to bring their writing to life for the reader, such as in their planning to write about the adventures of Ernest Shackleton.
- Pupils make significant and sustained progress in mathematics across the school. For the past three years, pupils' progress and the standards that they reach by the time they leave the school have been significantly above the national average. Leaders' determination for further improvements has resulted in a new approach to teaching being introduced this year. Pupils' books and inspectors' observations of lessons show that this has been successful in raising standards further. Pupils across the school display a deep understanding of mathematical ideas and are able to explain their thinking confidently.
- Pupils make excellent progress in reading and reach standards, by the time they leave the school, that are significantly above the national average. Those pupils that read to inspectors were mostly able to apply their phonic skills to sound out difficult words and use punctuation to add intonation to their reading. A love of reading is promoted well across the school. A number of pupils who spoke to inspectors described how reading with 'George' the greyhound, had helped them develop their confidence and reading skills.
- Teachers have high expectations of what all pupils can achieve. As a result, pupils of all abilities, including the most and least able, make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Likewise, those pupils with special educational needs also make excellent progress. In 2015, the overall progress that this group of pupils made, by the time they left the school, was significantly above the national average for other pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well at St Andrew's. This is because leaders precisely track their progress and ensure that the funding the school receives to support them is used very effectively. As a result, in 2015, disadvantaged pupils in school reached overall standards, by the end of Key Stage 2, that were above those seen by other pupils nationally.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching and leadership in the early years mean that children flourish from the outset when they begin their education at St Andrew's. They make rapid progress from their starting points that are often below those expected for their age. The building blocks that are securely in place by the time children leave the Reception Class ensure that they are very well prepared for Key Stage 1. The proportion of children leaving the early years with a good level of development has been above the national average for the past two years.
- Adults plan work that is challenging and stimulating, motivating children to do their best. High expectations of what children can achieve permeate every aspect of learning in the Reception class. In writing, for instance, children form their letters neatly, apply their phonic skills to spell tricky words and are able to use a range of punctuation accurately. As a result, pupils are able to write at length with confidence and maturity.
- A vibrant classroom and outdoor area are used well by adults to provide a broad range of purposeful and stimulating activities that allow children to explore and investigate, developing their independent learning skills. One boy, for example, was thrilled with a bird feeder that he had made by scooping out the inside of an orange and filling it with bird seed to be hung on a tree.
- Clear routines and high expectations ensure that children's behaviour is exemplary. Children listen attentively to adults and, as a consequence, learning moves forward rapidly. During a phonics session children were able to quickly apply their new learning of the 'ea' sound to writing sentences such as 'I had a bad dream' because of their excellent attitudes to learning.
- Children are proud of their work and adults celebrate success at every opportunity, developing children's confidence and self-esteem. Work displayed on 'our proud cloud', for instance, praises pupils for their independent writing skills and for learning their letter sounds.

- Leaders have developed excellent relationships with parents that help to support learning at home and school. The school has provided workshops, for example, to help parents understand a new approach to the teaching of mathematics. Furthermore, the modelling of story time in school has been successful in helping to develop reading at home.

School details

Unique reference number	105077
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10011064

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
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eirlys Tripp
Headteacher	Vivienne Woods
Telephone number	0151 645 7782
Website	www.st-andrews.eschools.co.uk/
Email address	schooloffice@standrews.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 November 2010

Information about this school

- St Andrew's CofE Aided Primary School is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. Pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom English is not, or is believed not to be, their first language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have educational needs or disability is broadly in line with the national average.
- In 2015 the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in each class of the school.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, members of staff, eight representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, school improvement planning, assessment information and reports on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally during the school day and observed them during playtime, lunch and before and after school. They also met formally with two small groups of pupils, including the worship committee, to chat about their learning and behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors heard several children read.
- Inspectors took note of displays around the school and the work in the outdoor areas.
- A range of pupils' books was checked.
- Inspectors spoke to a small number of parents at the start of the day. They also took account of the 66 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View).
- Two further Ofsted inspectors joined the inspection on the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Martin Bell, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sheila O' Keeffe	Ofsted Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector

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