



Inspection report

St Andrew the Apostle Catholic Primary School

Unique Reference Number 104470
LEA Knowsley

Inspection number 269334
Inspection dates 18 - 20 October 2004
Reporting inspector Pat Kime HMI

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the school Inspectors Act 1996, and was deemed section 12(3) under the same act.

Type of School	Primary	School address	Higher Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Halewood
Age range of pupils	3 - 11		Liverpool L26 1TD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 288 8940
Number on roll	219	Fax number	0151 288 8941
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Collette Morris
Date of previous inspection	May 1999	Headteacher	Mrs A R P D Rigby

Age group 3 - 11	Published November 2004	Reference no. 269334
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Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of St Andrew the Apostle Catholic Primary School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Andrew's is an average sized primary school, in Halewood, approximately six miles south east of Liverpool. It caters for boys and girls aged three to eleven years. There are 205 pupils in the main school and 31 part-timers in the nursery. More children are due to join the nursery later in the year. When they start in the nursery, children's language and social skills are below those usually seen in children their age. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds or have a home language other than English. A broadly average proportion of pupils, 21 per cent, are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with special educational needs is broadly average. Several new teachers have joined the school since the last inspection.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Overall effectiveness of the school

St Andrew the Apostle provides all its pupils with a good education in a very caring, happy atmosphere with a strong Catholic ethos. It provides good value for money. The school turns out well-rounded, confident pupils who are ready to make the most of secondary education. Teaching varies in quality but is good overall. The school provides a good curriculum and it is led and managed well. Pupils do well academically and reach above average standards. They make very good progress in their personal development. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate.

Grade: 2

Improvement since the last inspection

There has been good improvement since the last inspection. There has been very good overall improvement in standards since the year 2000. Teaching remains good, pupils continue to make good progress, and the management of the school has improved. The issues for improvement from the last inspection have all been resolved well.

Grade: 2

Capacity to improve

The school is well placed to improve. The school's self-evaluation acknowledges that there are areas of relative weakness and identifies them accurately. The headteacher and senior staff are thoughtful and innovative. The staff are determined to continue to improve standards and do the best for every pupil at St Andrew's. The significant improvement in test results in 2004, the standards seen in Year 6, and the recent great improvement in pupils' writing all indicate a capacity to carry out improvement.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

In order to build on its strengths and improve standards further, the school should:

- improve the quality of the less effective teaching
- sharpen the planning of work in non-core subjects, where necessary, to ensure consistent progression in pupils' learning
- improve the resources for information and communication technology (ICT)

Achievement and standards

All pupils make good progress in their time at St Andrew's, whatever their ability or particular learning needs. Standards achieved in the national tests have varied from year to year. This reflects both the quality of teaching and differences in the ability profile of the pupils. Nevertheless, over the last four years, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen. This improvement has been dramatic in mathematics, very good in science, and good in English.

For the current Year 6, the work seen in lessons and pupils books was above average overall, but better in mathematics than English.

Pupils' rate of progress varies between classes. They make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception). In Key Stages 1 and 2, there are years in which pupils do very well, but also pockets where less effective teaching means they make merely adequate progress.

Personal development is very good. Pupils develop very good attitudes to learning, a strong sense of personal responsibility, and confidence. These will stand them in good stead for the future. Behaviour is good overall. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good and their cultural development is satisfactory.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and many join in extra activities, such as learning to play musical instruments, French and Spanish clubs, and sports. Pupils are proud of their school and they respond very well to the many opportunities to take responsibility in practical ways, and to contribute to the life and work of the school and the wider community. For example, they are actively involved in assemblies; they act as 'buddies' to others who need a friend in the playground; and, through the school council, they have carried out improvements to the playground. Pupils are developing a very good understanding of citizenship. They show respect for each other and clearly follow the classroom and school rules. They learn to consider questions of right and wrong and to make right choices in their own lives. Although a small number of pupils have behavioural difficulties; they make very good progress in developing self-control.

Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and has risen over the last three years. A very small number of pupils are absent a lot but the school has very good systems to promote school attendance, and has brought about a significant improvement in these pupils' attendance.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

The quality of provision is good overall. The school provides a good curriculum and teaching is good. The care, support and guidance provided for pupils are very good.

The quality of teaching is good overall, but inconsistent. This was confirmed by the lessons observed, the work in pupils' books, and discussions with staff and pupils. Some of the recently-qualified

teachers are among the schools' most effective. In the majority of classes teaching is very good and pupils progress really well. Teaching in nursery and reception is very effective, particularly in personal, social and emotional development; and in communication, language and literacy. However, some of the teaching is only adequate and a small amount is not good enough.

In the most effective lessons, teachers capture pupils' interest and ensure that work is challenging but achievable for all pupils. They manage pupils' behaviour well. These lessons are planned very well and move along at a good pace; the pupils work very hard and relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.

In the small number of lessons teaching is less effective either because teachers do not manage the pupils well and lessons slow down because too much time is given over to organising the class and maintaining order, work is not closely matched to pupils' learning needs, or it is not explained sufficiently clearly.

The marking of pupils' work is mostly thorough and rigorous, but it does not always indicate clearly to pupils where they have done well and what they need to do to get better. Day-to-day checks on children's progress are very good in the Foundation Stage.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, meets the needs of all pupils and meets statutory requirements. It is extended by including French and Spanish. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, and on developing pupils' speaking skills as a precursor to writing. English, mathematics and science are kept as separate subjects but the school has recently taken an innovative approach to planning the curriculum in non-core subjects. This work is based around cross-curricular topics which interest the pupils, and which have a bias towards a different subject each half-term. In some cases, good progress has been made in linking subjects whilst ensuring pupils are effectively developing subject-specific skills and knowledge. However, in a few subjects pupils are not making the progress they could. The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of additional activities, including: clubs; educational visits and visitors; the opportunity to learn to play musical instruments and termly 'themed weeks' that deepen pupils' understanding of cultural diversity. For example, pupils have the chance to take part in musical events as part of Liverpool's capital of culture project.

The school rightly prides itself on the way it cares for all its pupils. Staff are concerned for the pupils' well being and the school does much to build their self-esteem and develop their independence. Pupils know there is always someone they can turn to if they have a problem. Well-established day-to-day routines ensure pupils' safety. There are rigorous child protection procedures and very good links with external agencies which ensure speedy intervention to support vulnerable pupils. Support for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. Pupils are encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle, for example through the provision for physical education and the national fruit scheme, and to respect and improve the environment. They are keen to be 'Green Knights' who collect litter and meet with the headteacher to discuss ways of recycling and saving energy.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

The school is led and managed well and it provides all its pupils with equal opportunities to achieve in all aspects of learning. The headteacher involves all the school's stakeholders, staff, pupils, governors and parents in planning for improvement, and there is a sense of common purpose and a strong commitment to doing the best for every pupil. The senior management team is strong, reflective and innovative. These senior staff are behind changes that have led to the recent improvement in standards, and they are strongly committed to continuing to move the school forward. Monitoring performance has developed well over the last two years. Pupils' progress is checked carefully as they move up the school to ensure they are on track to reach the standards they should, and staff are held accountable for progress in their classes. This, along with good opportunities for professional development matched to staff and the school's needs, has resulted in significant improvements in teaching. However, further improvement is needed if all staff are to make a full contribution to pupils' achievement. The governors are well-informed and they fulfil their responsibilities well. Taken overall, the accommodation and the resources for teaching and learning are sufficient, but there is not enough up-to-date, functioning equipment for ICT.

Grade: 2

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