



St Andrews Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 110443
LEA Milton Keynes

Inspection number 275908
Inspection dates 6 July 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs S. Vale

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

Type of School	First School	School address	High Street
School category	Voluntary Controlled		Great Linford
Age range of pupils	4 - 8		Milton Keynes
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01908 605515
Number on roll	29	Fax number	01908 605515
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	vacant
Date of previous inspection	June 1999	Headteacher	Mrs R Pichowski

Age group	Published	Reference no.
4 - 8	July 2005	275908

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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 St. Andrews First School.

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

St Andrews is a very small village school close to the centre of Milton Keynes. There are 29 pupils on roll who are taught in two classes. In 2001 local authority plans to change the school into a nursery were abandoned and numbers fell. They will fall still further when the current Year 3 leave and the school becomes an infant school. A third of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and a tenth are learning English as an additional language. Two pupils have special educational needs one of whom has a statement of need. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the average. During the past two years the school has been through a turbulent time in staffing with the absence of the headteacher, death of a member of staff and the serious illness of the secretary and other staff members.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

The school judges its effectiveness as satisfactory and several aspects of its work as good. These judgements are over generous. Serious weaknesses in leadership, governance and systems for monitoring and evaluating its own performance mean that the school is not effective overall. A period of unsettled times has meant that the school has been coasting for approximately 18 months; this has adversely affected its progress. The school made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection but this was not sustained due to mitigating circumstances. The school relies too heavily on informal ways of judging how well it is doing and aspects of underperformance are not well analysed or documented. It has recently started to improve, as seen for example, in the improved results of pupils in Year 2, and the headteacher and staff are aware of what needs to be done to put the school back on track. This shows that the school has the capacity to improve.

The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory but assessment and tracking of pupils' achievement is not yet fully embedded nor used well enough to support pupils' next step in their learning. Standards overall are satisfactory but there is a legacy of underachievement in writing in Year 3. There is good provision for the Foundation Stage and standards reached here are satisfactory. Despite staffing difficulties the school has maintained its very caring, family ethos. Parents are very positive about the school. A welcoming atmosphere ensures that pupils feel safe and enjoy being at this school. Although improved, attendance is still too low. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

Grade: 4

What the school should do to improve further

- As a matter of urgency ensure that staff are trained in the issues of child protection.
- Ensure that the governing body is proactive in leading the direction of the school and in evaluating what it provides.
- Establish more rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating provision to establish clear priorities for development.
- Implement the new assessment procedures consistently so that teachers' marking is relevant and pupils are set individual targets to help them improve.
- Seek the support of parents and carers to improve the children's attendance.

Achievement and standards

Standards are broadly in line with expectations for pupils' ages in Reception and Years 1 and 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 3 achieve better standards in mathematics than in writing. There is some evidence of underachievement in writing in Year 3.

The pupils achieved standards in reading, writing and mathematics that were well above average in 2003, but they were consistently in the bottom five or ten percent in three other years, when compared to similar schools. This degree of variation is not properly explained in the school's documentation. Results in 2004 were poor and were in the bottom five percent of all schools nationally. Results in Year 2 in 2005 show a good improvement on the previous years' results. All six pupils who sat the tests reached the average level in reading and mathematics, and five reached them in writing. Two pupils exceeded the expected level in mathematics.

The school has correctly identified writing and spelling as priorities for development but has only recently identified and taken action to improve the underachievement in writing in Year 3. Early indications are that pupils' work is beginning to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress.

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

This is a strength of the school and pupils' development and well being is promoted effectively. Pupils are confident and express themselves clearly. They enjoy their time at school. The school positively promotes a healthy life style, and pupils have the opportunity to drink water during the school day and eat fruit. There is an increasing emphasis on physical activity which the children enjoy. Parents are very happy with the ethos within the school and describe it as being like an extended family.

The pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The majority behave well and develop good social skills that will stand them in good stead in the future. Pupils are encouraged to think of others and to develop positive relationships within the small community and within the wider church community. A few pupils do not attend school regularly enough.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Inspectors do not agree with the school's evaluation that teaching is very good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The strengths of teaching include the caring environment which teachers create and the valuable help given by teaching assistants to support the pupils' learning. Lessons are planned well, and frequently effectively support the learning needs of individual pupils. On the whole teachers are good at managing pupils' behaviour and resources are used well to support pupils' learning. As part of their imaginative play, the youngest pupils made an aeroplane out of chairs and flew to Florida, inspired by their work in the class "travel agency". Assessment procedures have only been established within the last year. A significant weakness in the monitoring of the written work of Year 3 has recently been identified and appropriate action taken to improve things. However, the marking of pupils' work is not good enough and does not always help pupils to understand how they can improve in their learning.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

The school provides a broad and balanced range of work that meets statutory requirements, including religious education and personal, social, health education and citizenship. Despite the constraints of the building, resources are used well and the school makes the best use of available space. The curriculum for the foundation stage is good. The increased emphasis on physical education and health encourages pupils to develop healthy lifestyles. Pupils enjoy visits to places of interest.

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

Taken overall, staff look after pupils and care for them well. In its teaching the school successfully helps pupils to understand the importance of healthy eating, keeping fit and being careful about their personal safety. However arrangements for child protection are inadequate because staff have not had the necessary training to deal with such matters. This should be addressed as a matter of some urgency. Pupils with learning disabilities are supported well. Attendance is low and the school is not rigorous enough in following up the absences of a small number of pupils.

Grade: 3

Leadership and management

Leadership including governance has not been effective enough in helping the school to make progress over the past two years. It has been distracted by circumstances and has not been rigorous enough in monitoring and evaluating its own performance. The school has been over generous in its self review and has relied on informal ways of monitoring its quality. This has resulted in an inflated view of its performance. However, there is evidence that there is capacity for leadership and management to move the school forward and to get back on track. In general terms, the school is aware of the priorities for development and what needs to be done to achieve this.

The headteacher has a very heavy work load with a substantial teaching commitment of three days a week. Staff illness has meant that many jobs which could be delegated have fallen on to her shoulders. On top of this, governors have become too reliant on her input and leadership. This has resulted in an almost impossible task which she has tackled with fortitude. The governing body does not fulfil its statutory responsibilities with regard to child protection. A more rigorous, questioning approach from the governing body is required to give the headteacher the support she requires.

The school pays due regard to equality of opportunity. There is an effective partnership with outside support services for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. In this way the school is making suitable provision for vulnerable pupils. The financial resources are spent appropriately, despite a very tight budget for the school with such a small number of pupils. The building is used satisfactorily. There are good resources and best use is made of limited accommodation for physical education.

Grade: 4

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INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall	16-19
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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve?	3	
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	3	
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3	
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	Delete as appropriate
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health.	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.	Delete as appropriate
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.	No
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	Delete as appropriate
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	Delete as appropriate
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills.	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	NA
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	NA
Education for all learners aged 14-19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	NA

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St. Andrews First School
High Street
Great Linford
Milton Keynes

07/07/05

Dear Children

Thank you for being so helpful and welcoming when I came to visit your school. I enjoyed meeting you all and I am writing to let you know what I found out.

I was pleased to be able to talk to some of you and you were very clear that you enjoyed school, particularly your PE lessons. Teachers take good care of you and they help you with your work.

- The youngest children in reception are looked after well and this gives them a good start to school life.
- This is a happy school and your parents are very pleased with it.
- Most of you behave really well but there are one or two of you who do not always listen to the teachers.
- Teachers do not always ask enough of you or expect you to work hard enough. When this happens you don't learn as much as you could.

There are a number of ways in which the school can improve;

- Give each of you targets to help you make good progress in your work.
- The headteacher and governors need to check whether things are as good in the school as they think they are.
- All of you need to make sure that you come to school every day.

Thank you again and I hope that the inspection will be useful to your school and make it even better.

Sue Vale
Lead Inspector