



St Ann's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104800
LEA St. Helens
Inspection number 277220
Inspection dates 29 November 2005 to 30 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Brian Padgett HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	View Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Rainhill
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Prescot, Merseyside L35 0LQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 4265869
Number on roll	435	Fax number	0151 2893270
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr N Aderson
Date of previous inspection	3 April 2000	Headteacher	Mrs J Perkin

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school has 426 pupils, which is much larger than the average for a primary school. It is one of four schools that serve the village of Rainhill. Most of the children come from the village but up to a third come from further afield and a few travel considerable distances to attend the school. Relatively few children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most of these have been diagnosed with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) but there are also a small number of children with severe learning needs. Most children are of white British background with only a small proportion of children from minority ethnic heritages. Although few children receive a school meal free of charge, the area served by the school is of broadly average social and economic status. Children enter school with average levels of skills, knowledge and understanding.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education overall with some good and better features and provides satisfactory value for money. It has a good and caring ethos and has the full confidence of parents. Behaviour and attendance are good. Children are proud of their school and enjoy learning. They make good progress in their personal development in general and outstanding progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is because of the school's commitment to providing a well-rounded Christian education and a rich curriculum for each child that covers these aspects of personal development particularly well.

Teaching is broadly satisfactory with consistently good teaching in the Foundation Stage and towards the end of Key Stage 2, where standards and achievement are highest. The quality of provision in the Foundation Unit is uniformly good. No groups of children make unsatisfactory progress, but the more able are capable of higher standards and can cope with harder work. Standards at 7 years are average, at 11 they are above average in English and science and average in mathematics.

The school is well led and managed. All issues from the last inspection have been dealt with successfully. The school's self evaluation is of good quality and largely accurate. However, because of the lower standards in mathematics, and because more of the teaching is satisfactory rather than good, inspectors judge the school's effectiveness as satisfactory rather than as good, as the school judged itself. Strenuous efforts are being made to improve academic achievement to bring it more in line with what the school achieves for children's personal development. It is fully committed to this task and has good capacity for improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

To raise standards further the school should:

- improve the teaching of mathematics
- provide more challenging work for the more able children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children's achievement is satisfactory. The 4 and 5 year olds get off to a good start in the Foundation Unit. Children arrive at the school from a wide range of pre-school settings, and some with no experience of pre-school settings at all. They settle well. By the time they move into Year 1, most are ready to begin the National Curriculum. Seven year-olds attain broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in English, mathematics and science at 11 years of age are no longer as high as they were in past years in relation to those in other schools. They are above average and meet targets in English and science, but remain stubbornly around average and below target in mathematics, despite a lot of effort by staff over the past year. No group makes unsatisfactory progress, but more able children do not always achieve

as well as they might because they are not always given harder work to do. Most children identified as having learning difficulties make the same progress as other children. However, the small number with severe learning difficulties make good progress because of the quality of the support they receive and how well they are integrated within the school community.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good, with some outstanding features. At the time of the last inspection, in 2000, the school's maxim for children of 'Courtesy, Care and Concentration' was fully realised and it remains an accurate summary of children's current attitudes and behaviour and their approach to their work and to others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is first class, as is their positive contribution to the school community: they are developing into confident young people who enjoy learning and who take a genuine interest in the welfare of others. The school's council provides a good example of children taking increasing responsibility for decision making. Older children look to care for younger ones in the playground. Their sense of social and moral duty is developing well, as seen in the children's support for people in the third world, and in their performances for others within the local community. Children take advantage of the strength in provision in the arts to broaden their range of personal achievement, for example, by developing their skills and enjoyment in music and singing.

Attendance has been sustained at a high level with no unauthorised absence. Behaviour is good in class and outside. Children have fun in lessons and enjoy learning. They feel safe in school. There are few instances of bullying or intimidation, and when these occur, children and parents trust the staff to sort out the problems. The school is beginning to tackle issues around keeping children healthy and children are playing an active part in this. They are increasing the exercise they take, and are planning to change their snacks and dinners and eat more healthily.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. This judgement is at odds with the school's own view, which was that teaching and learning were 'good'. Almost half the teaching is good, but too much is satisfactory, just over half of that seen during the inspection. The relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and children are a great strength of the teaching, and because of this, lessons are often very enjoyable for children. The key point for improvement is in planning for the more able children, both to increase the pace and the difficulty of work for them, including that they should work more independently. At present, although good teaching occurs in each key stage, the best teaching is seen in the Foundation Stage and for the older children in

Key Stage 2 and this is where children make most progress and show most independence. The school recognises it needs to improve the consistency of teaching in order to secure higher standards, and teachers have sought out and put into practice several approaches designed to make learning more effective. For example, more care is now taken to provide a variety of tasks in lessons that appeal to children who work most effectively in different ways. There is an intention to involve children more in all their lessons by explaining what it is they are to learn and asking them what they have learned at the end.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and the school meets all its responsibilities. Appropriate emphasis is given to the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics and ICT. However, the strength of what the school offers is in the richness of the curriculum. The school seeks to provide a well- rounded education for its children and to promote academic achievement and personal fulfilment in equal measure. The curriculum is generally successful in doing this. Work in the arts, especially music, history, geography, French and citizenship ensures children have access to a broad range of learning in lessons. An extensive programme of enrichment brings visitors into school and takes children out of school, often on residential visits. The range of extra-curricular activities, praised in the last inspection, has been maintained and extended to include opportunities for children in Key Stage 1.

At present, excepting the Foundation Stage, morning lessons are usually devoted to literacy and numeracy. Some of these are rather long, particularly for younger children. There may be some scope for the school to reduce the time spent on literacy and numeracy without a cost to learning in these aspects, and to fit in another lesson into the morning session. In the Foundation Unit, the newly opened outdoor area has extended the quality of provision for children's physical as well as other areas of development. Although teachers are making increasing use of ICT there are few opportunities for children to use computers in other subjects because most computers are located in the computer suite. The school has well advanced plans to replace the computers in the suite with new machines and release the others to the classrooms and solve this problem.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. The care and support for children is particularly strong, as is the guidance for children in their personal development. It is only in the area of guidance for children in their academic progress where the school has work to do, and recent improvements in assessment and tracking children's progress have taken it a considerable distance to achieving this outcome. Parents recognise and value the major role the school plays in making their children happy and secure, and in promoting their overall development. The commitment of the staff to the pupils is undoubted. Child protection procedures are in place. This is a truly inclusive school

and the achievements of all children are celebrated. The support for children with learning difficulties or those at risk of underachievement is good, except for the more able, and teaching assistants play a positive and significant part in raising achievement and promoting children's self esteem.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the headteacher are good. She is key to understanding the strongly positive ethos of the school and the success with which it promotes the all round development of pupils. She holds an accurate view of the detailed strengths and weaknesses in provision, although her assessment of teaching was more positive than that of the inspectors. Her views are informed by her monitoring of teaching and learning, and she is instrumental in seeking improvements. She regularly samples the views of parents and children to keep her informed and in touch. She has rigorously pursued ways to counteract the decline in standards of mathematics, including enlisting the help of the local authority and taking part in national primary school improvement programmes. She has the full confidence of governors, parents, pupils and staff. Responsibility is delegated effectively and the headteacher receives strong support from her senior management team. Subject managers are effective. For example, the provision for children with learning difficulties is well managed, and the co-ordinators for mathematics have good plans to restore standards in mathematics and are energetically setting about this task.

The school has successfully dealt with issues from the previous inspection. It is well resourced and makes best use of its awkward accommodation. The strength of leadership and management and the commitment of staff to the pupils ensure that the school has good capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
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	
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	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, we have just finished inspecting your school and I am writing to tell you what we think. You made us feel welcome and we very much enjoyed talking to you. A special 'thank you' to those of you who came to tell us about your work and what you think of your school.

It is clear that you enjoy being at St Ann's and that you have a lot of fun in lessons. You behave well and are very polite to visitors. You take care of each other. You know about issues such as bullying and you are learning to be responsible members of the school community. We were pleased to see that you know how to keep yourselves safe, and that you are learning about healthy lifestyles.

Mrs Perkin and all of the staff work hard to give you lots of opportunities to learn different things throughout the day and after school. You go on some exciting visits and you have interesting visitors come to talk to you. The adults in the school look after you well.

We think that some of you could be doing better in your work and working even faster, especially in mathematics. We have asked the teachers to give some of you harder work because we think you can manage it.