



St Andrew's CofE Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105077
Local Authority Wirral
Inspection number 287117
Inspection dates 2–3 October 2006
Reporting inspector Clare Henderson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Townfield Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Lower Bebington, Wirral
Age range of pupils	4–11		Merseyside CH63 7NL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 6457782
Number on roll (school)	219	Fax number	0151 6438625
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr R Humphries
		Headteacher	Mrs Vivienne Woods
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Andrew's Church of England primary school is smaller than average and its social context is no more or less favourable than most schools. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion entitled to a free school meal. The school is part of a local schools' learning network. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to achievement and standards in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 and in addressing underachievement in writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6.

Achievement is inadequate. Over the past two years the school has been through a period of staffing changes that have adversely affected the standards reached by pupils in Key Stage 1 and the progress made by many pupils within Years 3 to 6. Whilst standards are above average at the end of Year 6, many pupils do not achieve as well as they could, particularly in writing and mathematics. This underachievement and the fall in standards at Key Stage 1 mean that the school has failed to take effective steps to improve since the last inspection and that it provides inadequate value for money.

The recently appointed headteacher quickly identified and started to tackle the issue of underachievement in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2. Strategies implemented to improve the achievement of pupils who are behind where they should be are starting to have an impact, which can be seen in the improvement in test results for Year 6 pupils in 2006. Improvements in the tracking of pupils' progress are also beginning to pay off in Key Stage 2 but tracking of progress in Key Stage 1 still lacks the rigour required to enable pupils to achieve their best. As a result, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 are not high enough.

Rigorous monitoring has brought about improvements in the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory. Provision in the Foundation Stage enables pupils to make satisfactory progress from their above-average starting points.

The school has satisfactory procedures for evaluating its work, which ensure leadership and management have an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. As a result, the appropriate areas for improvement have been identified and sensible plans put in place to enable the school to move forward. This, together with the initial success of actions taken and the rigour of monitoring procedures, shows that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve. The headteacher has also largely stabilised the school's staffing, although some staffing issues in Key Stage 1 remain unresolved.

Throughout the school there are many strengths in pupils' personal development and in the level of care and support provided for them. As a result, pupils enjoy school, behave well and, with the many opportunities given to them, mature into caring, responsible individuals. The good links made with parents, the church and local community contribute well to pupils' well-being and enhance their awareness of the needs of others and their place in the world. The curriculum provided is satisfactory and the wide array of opportunities given to pupils through lively enrichment activities, both within and outside the school day, greatly enhances their personal development and enjoyment of school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1.
- Tackle the underachievement in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2 to enable all

pupils to achieve as best they can.

- Ensure that the tracking of pupils' progress is rigorous enough to help in raising standards and to provide a clear picture of achievement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

On starting school pupils' skills are above average for their age. They make satisfactory progress in Reception, doing particularly well in their personal, social and physical development. In 2006, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 fell significantly. This was the result of the high level of disruption to staffing within Key Stage 1. Test results in Year 6 during the past few years, whilst being above the national average, show that pupils underachieve in writing and mathematics. Although an improvement in achievement for Year 6 pupils in writing and mathematics took place in 2006, pupils presently in Years 3 to 6 are not making the progress that they should in these two subjects. They do not achieve as well as they should and standards are not high enough. The school has identified this underachievement and taken steps to address it. However, it is too soon to judge the full impact of these initiatives. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good because of the good quality support provided for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils enjoy learning and say that lessons are fun. Their motivation was evident as Year 6 pupils explained how they had written biographies of pop stars and in the wide range of work on 'super heroes' undertaken in Year 3. Behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe in school and know that they can turn to the staff for help if they are worried. Pupils quote diet, exercise and sleep as key features of a healthy lifestyle and understand how to keep safe, for example on the road and when using the Internet. Personal development is enhanced through pupils' involvement with the community, such as distributing harvest gifts and though helping the school attain Eco status. Pupils appreciate the good range of visits and visitors provided. Many of these enhance their understanding of their own and other cultures, such as the musicians from Africa and visits to the Fairtrade exhibitions. Pupils are polite and willingly take on responsibilities, such as acting as school councillors and older pupils acting as 'buddies' to younger ones. The strength of this was evident at the end of assembly when Reception children sought out their Year 6 'buddy' to wave and smile

to as they left. Attendance is broadly average and has improved in response to a good range of incentives that pupils are keen to earn.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Currently teaching is stronger at Key Stage 2, where stability to staffing has improved and teachers are beginning to tackle the underachievement in writing and mathematics. Good features of lessons here are the high levels of challenge provided which enable the higher attaining pupils to be stretched to achieve their best. In such lessons, teachers also show good subject knowledge and work is matched well to meet the needs of different groups of learners within the class. Opportunities for pupils to work independently, to be involved in assessment and being reminded of their targets as they progress in their learning, are also strengths. Weaker lessons suffer from a level of challenge that is too low, which can lead to minor misbehaviour. Teaching assistants, supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are skilful and effective in helping these pupils to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Planning is being reviewed to ensure relevant links are made between subjects and to allow pupils regular opportunities to use and develop skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The school's commitment to promoting pupils' all-round development is seen in the implementation of thorough programmes for personal, social, emotional and health education. In addition to the good range of visits and visitors, pupils' knowledge of the wider world is fostered well through listening to music, studying different art and learning French in Years 3 and 4. Extra-curricular provision supports development in subjects such as music and physical education (PE). Links with a local high school also enhance provision in PE and French. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have well planned individual programmes of work. Those learning to speak English are also supported effectively through links with the local authority and specialised tasks in school. The school is implementing an appropriate range of additional programmes to boost the achievement of identified pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral care is strong. The school's Christian ethos comes through strongly and parents are particularly pleased at how well their children are looked after and cared for. However, some express concerns about interruptions to the continuity of learning that has happened in the past through staffing disruptions in some classes in Key Stages 1 and 2. The principles set out

nationally in Every Child Matters are evident in the good support given to promoting pupils' personal development and to specific groups, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. The school complies with the legislation covering the welfare of pupils, with all staff and governors having completed recent training on child protection. The school is now implementing rigorous systems to record and track pupils' progress and achievement. These are in the early stages of development, particularly at Key Stage 1. Work so far has resulted in the implementation of programmes to boost the attainment of particular groups in English and mathematics, though it is too soon to see the full impact of these. Pupils have been given targets in these subjects and are developing a satisfactory understanding of how well they are doing and where they need to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, together with the deputy headteacher, has established a clear direction for the school. With determination she has accurately identified the areas of improvement needed to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement. The school improvement plan reflects this. The actions taken to improve pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 are beginning to succeed, however, it is too soon to judge their full impact. The quality of learning has been improved through establishing rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics. However, they are not yet implemented consistently enough to give a clear picture of pupils' achievement as they progress through the school. Many subject leaders are new to their roles and are still developing the skills needed to take a greater share of the work of school improvement. Parents show appreciation of the good relationships staff form with their children. However, some have raised concerns about the unsettled staffing which they feel has slowed down their children's progress. The school seeks out and responds well to the views of parents and pupils. Governors work cooperatively with the school and the local authority, fulfilling their responsibilities appropriately. They know and support the school well. They have a satisfactory understanding of the challenges the school faces and of their role in the improvement process.

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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
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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?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance 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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the 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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know we visited your school recently to find out how well it is doing in helping you to learn. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming. We really enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about your school and what you like best about it. Although your school has to do things to improve how well you learn, these are the things that we found to be good about your school.

- You all get on so well with each other.
- You behave politely and sensibly in lessons and around the school.
- People in school take good care of you.
- Your parents give support to the school.
- There are many school clubs which you enjoy attending.

Your school needs to do more to make sure you all learn as much as you possibly can. We have asked your teachers to improve these things in particular.

- Help those of you in Year 1 and 2 to do much better in your reading, writing and mathematics.
- Help those of you in Years 3 to 6 to do much better in your writing and mathematics.
- To make sure that your teachers give you work that will help you achieve the best you possibly can.

We have given your school a 'Notice to Improve', which means it will receive extra help. You can play your part by always working hard and doing your best in lessons. Inspectors will also return to your school to see how well the school has improved since this visit.

Thank you again for helping with the inspection.