

St Andrew's Methodist Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105938
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	287369
Inspection date	19 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Dee Brigstock

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	225
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Evitts
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Smith
Date of previous school inspection	3 March 2003
School address	Prescott Street off Hilton Lane Worsley Manchester M28 0ZA
Telephone number	0161 7903194
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Andrew's is an above average sized school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average, reflecting an above average level of social deprivation in the area. The majority of pupils are from a White British background. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the number of pupils with a statement of educational need is also below average. A small number of pupils are looked after by the local authority. The school is part of an Education Action Zone.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Parents wholeheartedly support the school. A representative quote was: 'St Andrew's Methodist School is a very special school. The whole staff work hard to provide the best possible education for the children.'

This is an outstanding school. Due to the good curriculum and excellent care, guidance and support, pupils' personal development is exemplary. Pupils have a first rate knowledge of how to stay fit and healthy, their behaviour is excellent, they take on extra responsibilities willingly and, by Year 6, develop into mature, well-mannered, literate young people with excellent social skills and a secure knowledge of the difference between right and wrong.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. At the end of key stages 1 and 2, standards in English, mathematics and science have been well above average for several years. This achievement is due to teachers' very high expectations of themselves and of their pupils. Achievement for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similarly excellent. Teachers set very challenging targets for pupils to achieve in English, mathematics and science. As a result, pupils know what they have to do to improve even further, and how to do it. Teachers adapt their work to changing circumstances. For example, in 2006, for the first time in several years, some of the most capable Year 6 pupils did not meet the standards expected for them in writing by a slender margin. The school quickly provided pupils with additional opportunities to practise their writing, and made sure that they better understood how to improve further. The school analyses pupils' performance rigorously and has assessment data to show that pupils are on track to meet the targets set for them in 2007 and 2008. But these numerical targets do not reflect pupils' true capabilities and are not demanding enough for some of the most capable pupils. In Year 2 and Year 3, pupils learn to write using a joined handwriting style. This is not consistently built on in Years 4 to 6 and some pupils, even the most capable, regress to printing their work. This level of presentation does not match the high standards pupils reach in their writing, which is well constructed and lively.

The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has, supported by governors, restructured the staffing, creating a new senior management team. This team is trained to monitor the work of the school, including making judgements on the quality of teaching. Teachers, pupils and their parents are all aware of how pupils can improve their work further through having joint meetings to discuss future targets. This is a successful partnership that helps to maintain the pupils' excellent achievement. These targets are more challenging than the school's official ones, which predict Year 6 test results from the standards gained in Year 2. These numerical targets are regularly exceeded by pupils. The school's evaluation of its work is good overall but leaders' focus on improvement has led them to underrate the effectiveness of two elements: the Foundation Stage and the quality of teaching and learning. These aspects are outstanding rather than good, demonstrating the lack of complacency in school as it builds on its clear strengths. However, the curriculum is good rather than outstanding, as the school suggests, because some subjects, such as design technology are not developed as well as they could be.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' handwriting and presentation skills in Years 3 to 6.
- Accurately reflect pupils' achievement within the target-setting process.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Year 6 pupil quote: 'We do tests. We know what level we get in Year 6. If the work is too easy we get extension work.'

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are below average. They make excellent progress in all aspects of their learning and by the time they enter Year 1, exceed national expectations for their age. By Year 2, standards are well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Overall, by Year 6, standards are well above average with particularly high attainment in mathematics. Well above average standards and excellent achievement have been maintained over a period of several years and pupils clearly make consistently good progress throughout the school. In 2006, prompt and effective action was taken to deal with any future underperformance at the higher level in writing, for example, through the provision of additional booster classes. Older pupils now have better information on how to assess their own learning and more focused targets on how to meet the higher Level 5 standards. The school already has assessments that show how well current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain these higher levels. In Year 2 and Year 3, pupils begin to write using a joined handwriting style. This is not consistently built on in following years and some older pupils go back to printing their work, lowering the quality of their presentation.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupil quote: 'Teachers deal with problems kindly - anytime, anyplace, anywhere.'

Frequent and constructive links with the church aid pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which is outstanding. Pupils are delightfully well mannered and behaved and clearly love coming to school. Younger children are beginning to relate well to each other as they share an exciting range of activities in the Foundation Stage. The average attendance is due in part to unavoidable absence by a few pupils for medical reasons. Pupils' substantial charitable work in the local and worldwide community promotes their understanding of economic and environmental issues well and they develop a strong sense of responsibility towards those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils on the school council have had a measurable impact on the extensive and attractive development of the outdoor areas. They are eager to take on more responsibility for planning their own agenda for meetings. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to stay fit, healthy and safe and benefit from a well-prepared range of healthy foods at lunchtime. These attributes reflect the national awards received by the school, which include a county and national Healthy Schools Award and a silver Eco Award for pupils' work in the environment. Their exceptional enjoyment in learning, attendance, attitudes to work, and the well above average standards they attain, equip them extremely well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Pupil quote: 'When you're stuck, you can have a little meeting and the teachers help you get through it.'

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers in the Foundation Stage are very successful at introducing phonic work to younger children in a fun way, such as through nursery rhymes. This is having a very positive impact on children's learning of early reading and writing skills. Throughout the school, teachers' excellent classroom management skills, and high expectations of pupils' achievement, ensure that no time is wasted in lessons. They use assessment well to construct lessons which meet all pupils' learning needs. As one pupil said, 'Teachers plan different work for each table.' Teaching assistants are extremely well qualified and contribute very effectively to pupils' learning. Teachers' marking is good; their use of targets and pointers on how pupils can improve their work even further are very specific. Teachers have high expectations of how much pupils can achieve, except pupils' skills in presentation. This is particularly so in Years 4 to 6, where some pupils, despite the fact they know how to join their handwriting, choose to print their work, which takes them longer.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils' say: 'We learn about World War 2, mountains in France, Tudors, the Water Cycle, 20th century, Greeks and Vikings, St Lucia, Mexico. We do cheerleading, astronomy - It doesn't get boring.'

The Foundation Stage curriculum is excellent. It successfully combines indoor and outdoor learning helped by a vibrant, exciting, busy outdoor classroom. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is enriched well, for example, in modern foreign languages, sports and music. Pupils enjoy a good range of visitors and visits which they say, 'are great,' and which provide them with good first-hand learning experiences. The school, after requests from pupils, provides a wide and interesting range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. Members of the church and other friends of the school effectively enrich the curriculum further. For example, they take the lead in introducing pupils to planting and growing their own herbs and vegetables. The curriculum is adapted well for girls, who have a history of not achieving as well as boys in the local area. Girls attended a talk given by successful career women at the local high school to boost their aspirations. The curriculum is also adapted very well for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those pupils with gifts and/or talents, through teachers' excellent planning; thus enabling them to reach their potential. Some subjects in the curriculum are not developed as well as they could be. For example, art and design technology do not have a high profile, limiting pupils' creative talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupil quote: 'We know how to stay safe. We get people to come in and teach us - like the Crucial Crew.'

The overwhelming majority of parents feel that their children are well cared for and supported. The school makes every effort to ensure pupils are safe and secure and procedures are fully in place for child protection and for vetting staff. Risk assessments are thorough. Teachers' use of an agreed marking scheme is well understood by pupils who say, 'They (teachers) put symbols when they mark (our work) so we have to improve it.' This thorough marking and use of targets to inform pupils how to improve further, effectively support pupils' excellent achievement. Links with outside agencies are extremely effective. For example, they extend the curriculum to provide specialist learning in Spanish and music and provide additional support for vulnerable pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Pupil quote: The headteacher could be a school inspector because she's good at writing letters and she arranges the school so it's enjoyable.'

The headteacher's outstanding leadership is reflected in her flair, imagination and determination to do her best for all the pupils and staff in school. She has effectively empowered members of the senior management team who, in partnership with a good, supportive governing body, share and support her vision. Pupils' well-being and the principles of 'Every Child Matters' lie at the heart of the school development plan which is comprehensive, well written and organised. It accurately reflects the issues identified for improvement in the school's own evaluation of its work. The headteacher makes very focused classroom observations which record teachers' strengths and how they can improve further. As a result of these observations, additional staff training is sought and provided if required. There is a very strong link between observing practice, improving it and raising the aspirations of all staff. This, in turn, improves staff expertise, raises morale and results in outstanding pupil achievement. These factors signify the school has excellent capacity to improve. The school's improvement since the last inspection is good and it provides excellent value for money.

Pupils' progress is tracked very closely and whole-school targets are set using information from tests. These predict broadly average progress. In effect, this is a paper exercise. Teachers set pupils' targets that are more challenging. As a result, pupils exceed these 'official' targets.

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Annex A

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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making me welcome in your school and for talking with me so willingly. I hope you see that I have included some of your comments in my report. I really enjoyed talking with you and would have liked to have stayed longer.

I think you should be very proud of your school and your work. It is an excellent school and you make good progress all the way through school. The strongest aspects of your school are:

- the high standards you reach in your work
- the interesting learning activities for Nursery and Reception children and their superb outdoor classroom
- your extremely good understanding of how to stay fit, healthy and safe, for your age
- your behaviour is excellent and everyone seems to get on well with one another
- your headteacher and governors are doing an outstanding job in always trying to make the school even better
- your work in improving the grounds and gardens is excellent.

To improve your writing even more, I have asked your headteacher to ensure you always do your best handwriting and join it all the time in Years 3 to 6.

You know how to improve your work further because your teachers are really good at helping you do this. Your parents also have this information. In fact, you are doing better than the school predicts you will, so, I have asked the headteacher to make the whole-school targets a bit more challenging.

I hope you will carry on enjoying learning and I wish you all the very best for your futures.