



St Andrew's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111301
Local Authority Warrington
Inspection number 288917
Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007
Reporting inspector Delia Hiscock

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mardale Avenue
School category	Voluntary aided		Orford, Warrington
Age range of pupils	4–11		Cheshire WA2 9HF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01925 630497
Number on roll (school)	216	Fax number	01925 630497
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Fr Michael Raynor
		Headteacher	Mr Kevin Dyson
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007	Inspection number 288917
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school serves an urban population with significant socio-economic disadvantage. Over one third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and there is a similar proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. A tiny number are from minority ethnic families and just one speaks English as an additional language. The school is broadly average in size; numbers having increased in the past two years in Key Stage 2. The school has gained a Healthy Schools Award and Activemark for sports.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides good value for money. It has made good improvement since the previous inspection and has adapted provision successfully to meet the needs of its many new pupils. These pupils are correct in their view that pupils like the school, enjoy learning and feel that they are important to the staff. The exceptionally caring staff support the pupils by ensuring that their well-being is central to the school's work. This is reflected in good attendance that has improved over several years. Parents think highly of the school because, as one parent wrote, 'It meets all my child's needs.' In this respect, the school fulfils its aim to nurture its pupils towards their potential, whatever the skills or difficulties they bring with them to school. The outstanding range and quality of links with support agencies, the local nursery and high school help pupils make their next steps very confidently. Because of teaching which is good overall and sometimes outstanding, the pupils are motivated to learn and they mature into thoughtful and courteous individuals who know how to make a contribution to their community.

Their learning journey starts well in the Foundation Stage where a good basis for working independently is well established in the Reception class. As a result, children make good progress from well below average standards when they start school. Good progress continues in Key Stages 1 and 2, with effective strategies to support pupils' learning helping the vast majority, including the high proportion of pupils with significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those new to the school, to attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Overall, pupils achieve well during their time at the school. However, standards in English continue to be lower than in other subjects at Key Stage 2 because there are inconsistencies in teaching the basics of spelling, handwriting and punctuation, and too few pupils know how to improve their work or how well they should achieve.

Leaders at all levels provide an excellent example for the pupils, but it is the dedicated leadership of the headteacher that ensures pupils develop the skills and qualities they need for life in a climate of harmony and calm. The curriculum is good. Activities, including provision for information and communication technology (ICT), enrich pupils' lives, nurture their talents and open up new horizons. Although rightly focused on developing basic skills, the curriculum also widens pupils' experiences and provides lots of fun. Many of them really enjoy the extended provision too, and some of them gain some good skills at table football!

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching spelling, handwriting and punctuation in Key Stage 2 so that pupils achieve higher standards in English.
- Ensure that pupils in Key Stage 2 know how to improve their work and how well they should achieve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All groups of pupils achieve well overall, including those who join the school in Key Stage 2. In reading, pupils achieve exceptionally well. Children in their Reception year make good progress overall from well below average standards on starting school, with particularly low communication skills. They attain close to average standards by the start of Year 1. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were low in 2005, apparently indicating a three-year declining trend of attainment, particularly in mathematics. However, this decline is explained by the many pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who joined the school during Key Stage 2. Results in 2006 saw significant improvements in standards, especially for the more able pupils in English and science. This reflects the school's effective response to the changing nature and needs of its different cohorts. Attainment in English is boosted by the outstanding skills pupils gain in reading, which is taught thoroughly and well. However, inconsistencies in Key Stage 2 in the teaching of spelling, handwriting and punctuation weaken attainment in writing, hampering the flair and empathy with which some of the older pupils write.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, their well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good and are strengths of the school. Staff provide very good examples for pupils and very good relationships exist between all in the school. This is why the pupils become confident learners who behave outstandingly well and whose self-esteem blossoms. Attendance is good, having improved greatly as a result of very effective management that has paid dividends in improving pupils' enjoyment of school and hence their achievement. Important seeds for pupils' futures are planted early. Pupils know a lot about healthy foods, make sensible choices in the snacks they select in school and learn how to avoid any potential dangers they might encounter in their lives. Their skills as readers are effective and though their basic writing skills are not as robust, they acquire the habits and qualities they need for the workplace through speaking, listening, sharing and collaborating well with their classmates. These personal qualities and skills flow into the playground too, so the pupils feel safe and largely free from any instances of oppressive behaviour. They fulfil their responsibilities well through the school council, although they remain a little reliant on adults. Through their support for international charities, such as 'Send a Cow', they all learn what it is to make a difference to the lives of others less fortunate.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils work and play in an exceptionally calm and fruitful environment where kindness and excellent relationships promote their confidence and open their eyes to new ideas. Planning is well matched to their many needs, questioning is very effective, and teaching aids are used effectively to motivate the pupils. New technology makes learning interesting, challenging and more accessible for pupils. Teaching assistants help pupils to catch up or consolidate their learning, particularly those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or who are in the early stages of learning English. Teachers use some effective ways to assess what their pupils have learned and the best quality marking explains to pupils what they need to do to improve their work and what they could aim towards. However, most marking is rudimentary. In Key Stage 2, learning to write is hindered because confusingly different approaches are used to teach spelling, handwriting and punctuation.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum's effective emphasis on numeracy, literacy and ICT, and on pupils' personal, social, and health education, helps the school to meet well the diversity of pupils' needs. The many additional opportunities for sharing a book with an adult, and for small groups of pupils to catch up or reinforce skills, are key features that foster good progress. The outstanding provision for extra-curricular and extended school activities, transition to high school, and induction arrangements all help to smooth pupils' learning journeys and enrich their lives in lots of ways. The many and varied sports activities and interesting clubs are thirstily taken up, and some exciting themed weeks, as well as many visits and visitors, are highlights that make coming to school a must. There are also plenty of good opportunities for the pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. The Foundation Stage curriculum successfully develops skills leading to independence and robust habits for learning, but opportunities for adventurous exploratory play are not as rich.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. The school is very successful in fulfilling its aims to nurture its pupils. Exceptionally good pastoral care and support for their well-being is central to its purpose. All procedures for safeguarding pupils, including arrangement to protect children and to minimise potential risks to safety, are in place. The care and pastoral support of the pupils is managed very well. Any pupil that the school is concerned about receives sensitive background support, and regular checks ensure that these pupils thrive. Excellent inter-agency and transition links support pupils well. The school has good procedures in place for judging how much pupils have

learned and uses the information effectively to plan additional work to boost their progress where needed. Pupils know what they are learning in lessons and some of them know what they need to do to improve their work, though are less aware of what they should aim to achieve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has a clear vision for the future of the school and proven ability to build on its successes. At the heart of his philosophy there is an uncompromising emphasis on preparing all pupils for life by equipping them with the skills and qualities they will need. Together with the governors and leadership at all levels, the headteacher has created an outstanding ethos and an attractive environment that makes every member of the school family want to be there. Parents agree and say that they wholeheartedly support the work of the school. Effective delegation, good professional development and performance management widen leadership skills, so staff have good skills to monitor and advise colleagues. They then make an informed contribution to school improvement plans because they know how well pupils are progressing. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, takes in everyone's views and uses its analysis of assessment to establish priorities for the next stages of improvement. Importantly, details translate into changes that bring about further improvement. This demonstrates the school's good capacity for improvement. Governors play an effective role in helping the school to move forward because they share an accurate view of the school with the staff.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	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	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 the learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Hello again. Thank you very much for being really helpful and courteous when we visited your school. It was really interesting listening to what you had to say. We are writing this letter to tell you that we found your school to be a good one - just as you and your parents said it is.

All of the teachers and classroom helpers try really hard to make sure that you are well looked after when you are in school and they try to make sure too that you all do well in your work, including those of you older pupils who are new to the school.

We think that you behave really well and that you work ever so hard. This is one of the things that help you to do well. Like you, we think that there are lots of good things going on before and after school too. We found also that you read ever so well.

To help you to do even better, we have asked the school to:

- help you to do even better in your writing in Key Stage 2 (we loved your writing in subjects like history etc. but we think your spelling and punctuation could be a bit more accurate, and for some of you, your handwriting needs a bit of practice)
- help you to improve some of your work yourself. We also think that if you get to know what you could achieve in your work, you would 'reach for the sky' and do even better!

We could see that you know how to keep safe and healthy and we saw that at playtimes, lots of you choose healthy snacks to eat. Keep up your good work, look after each other, and good luck for the future!