

St Andrew's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 115281 |
| Local Authority | ESSEX |
| Inspection number | 290188 |
| Inspection dates | 17–18 May 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Martin Beale |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 222 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Rev T C Thorpe |
| Headteacher | Mrs Gillian Young |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4 April 2005 |
| School address | School Green Lane North Weald Epping Essex CM16 6EH |
| Telephone number | 01992 522283 |
| Fax number | 01992 522449 |

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|--------------------------|----------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school in which eligibility for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average, and the proportion learning English as an additional language is low. The proportion of pupils identified by the school with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to other primary schools. Five pupils have a statement of special educational need. Attainment on entry is in line with that normally expected of four-year-olds.

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's judgement that its effectiveness is satisfactory is accurate. It has made progress since its last inspection and is moving in the right direction through a greater focus from the headteacher, staff and governors on improving pupil achievement. It has also benefited from intensive and continuing support from the local authority. While most parents are positive about the school, more so than at the last inspection, a small number have misgivings about aspects of its work.

There is still some way to go before pupils make the consistent progress needed to achieve all that they might. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. The school now has several skilled teachers to act as models for others, but not enough lessons challenge pupils or extend their thinking, particularly the more able. Teachers are adopting more creative ways to develop learning and are generally skilled at ensuring pupils are engaged by the work, but there are times when pupils become distracted when lessons are uninspiring. Furthermore, there are few instances where pupils use the new technology available to develop their learning.

Leadership and management have improved and are satisfactory with indications of emerging good practice. Key governors provide support for the headteacher in her drive to raise achievement. There is a clear direction to the school's work which has enabled improvements to be secured in key areas since the last inspection. Roles are now distributed among the teaching staff and are being undertaken more effectively. School self-evaluation has become a more secure basis from which to plan for improvement, but does not consistently give a full picture of where strengths or weaknesses lie. The school is also not sufficiently challenging in the targets it sets for individual pupils and so is not always able to identify areas of underachievement.

The youngest children make a good start in the Reception class. Teaching here is good, the environment is stimulating, and greater use than previously is being made of the outside area. This start is not built on consistently across all years in the rest of the school, although achievement is satisfactory and standards are close to the national average. Pupils with learning difficulties or English as an additional language make similarly satisfactory progress. Some underachievement in the past has led to pupils not always reaching the standards they should. There is clear evidence of improvement and pupils are now making good progress in some years.

The curriculum in the main school is satisfactory and generally meets the pupils' needs. Enrichment activities are wide ranging and add interest to the pupils' learning and development. The care, guidance and support they receive are good. Pupils feel safe, secure and happy in school. Their personal development and well-being are good. They are able to talk about things they like and aspects of the school they would like to see improved.

Systems for improving the performance of all staff are more rigorous than they were and are starting to lead to improvements. Recent improvements in school performance and in leadership and management mean that the school is soundly placed to improve further, particularly with the continued support from the local authority. The school's previous designation as having serious weaknesses no longer applies.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching by enabling pupils to use new technology to extend their learning and ensuring more able pupils are consistently challenged.

- Evaluate more thoroughly the effectiveness of action taken to improve pupil achievement.
- Ensure that targets set for pupils are based on their prior attainment, are challenging and that they are used to identify more clearly where there is any underachievement.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Most reach, and several exceed, national goals by the end of Reception. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties or for whom English is an additional language, make satisfactory and improving progress across Years 1 to 6, although this varies across year groups. Current standards largely reflect recent test results, although improvements are starting to be seen. The results of Year 2 assessment rose in 2006 and were close to national averages in all subjects. Boys did not do as well as girls in reading and writing. Year 6 test results have steadily improved over the last three years and were close to the national average in all subjects in 2006. This represented sound overall progress for pupils from their Year 2 results, but good progress in science. As at Year 2, boys did not do as well as girls.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Parents support the view that their children enjoy school. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes, although some become distracted when lessons are not sufficiently demanding. Attendance has improved as a result of the school's action and is now average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show respect for the customs of others and have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils have a valuable impact on the school's development through their work on the school council. They are proud of their 'friendship bench' in the playground. Pupils are very aware of how to be safe, eat healthy food and they exercise regularly to keep fit. They raise money for charity and contribute to the school community, for example when supporting younger or new pupils in the playground. Pupils are enthusiastic participants in the extra activities provided for them. Their positive personal qualities and their basic skills mean that they have a sound foundation for their future education and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching has improved in the last year, although the pattern is not yet consistent enough to ensure that pupils make good progress. A reasonable proportion of lessons are well taught with some outstanding features, but some inadequate aspects remain that the school is trying hard to eliminate. Pupils are fully engaged and become immersed in their work when teachers make lessons interesting, vary the activities and use interactive whiteboards and video clips to stimulate interest. Teachers are now using assessment information more effectively to plan lessons and activities that meet the learning needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. However, they do not consistently challenge the thinking of more able pupils for whom lessons can be quite routine

and uninteresting. Teaching assistants are generally purposefully deployed and make a valuable contribution to the achievement of the pupils they support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum promotes the pupils' personal development well. Pupils participate in a wide range of sports activities as recognised by the award of the Active Mark Gold. The after-school activities and a good range of trips, including a residential visit, add another dimension to pupils' learning. Programmes to support pupils with learning difficulties or with English as an additional language are carefully planned. Appropriate attention is given to developing pupils' basic skills and making links between subjects. Activities, such as using film as a stimulus to engage boys more in writing, are starting to have a positive effect on the quality of their work. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are taught, but pupils have few opportunities to apply their skills consistently to extend their learning in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Teachers and other staff deal with pupils in a very caring and sensitive manner. As a result, pupils say they feel safe in school and know who to go to if they are worried or upset. Arrangements to ensure their welfare and to safeguard their well-being are thorough and rigorously implemented. Close and effective links are established with several outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties. Assessment data are used well to track pupils' progress and to put in place programmes to support those who are behind where they should be for their age. However, they are not always used effectively to challenge more able pupils who are underachieving. Pupils are set learning targets in English and mathematics, which along with focused marking make clear to pupils the steps needed to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The impact of the headteacher's leadership has increased since the last inspection, as has the effectiveness of other senior staff and the governing body. All members of staff have become more focused on what is needed to raise pupil achievement. More rigorous monitoring is leading to the identification of priorities for action and improved school performance. Self-evaluation has become more thorough, but does not always ensure that the senior staff and governors are fully aware of what works best in school. Systems are also developing to help them to become clearer about the impact of their actions on the progress of different groups of pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, the targets set for National Curriculum test performance of individual pupils are not always sufficiently challenging to act as a tool for raising their achievement. The governing body has become more effective because of the efforts of key governors. Falling pupil numbers have put a strain on the budget, but the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 3 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 3 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| 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 | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 3 |
| 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? | 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| 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 | 2 |
| 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 | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| 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? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's CofE Primary School, School Green Lane, North Weald, Epping, Essex
CM 16 6EH

I am writing to thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school. You were all very helpful. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers and watching you learn. There are several aspects of your school that we judged to be good. You, your parents and teachers are right in thinking that you go to an improving school.

You make satisfactory progress and most of you meet the standards expected by the time you move on to secondary school. You enjoy school, work hard and behave sensibly. You clearly enjoy the clubs, trips and visits provided for you. The care, support and guidance you receive are good. You are learning how important diet and exercise are for a healthy lifestyle. You take your responsibilities seriously and make a considerable contribution to the life of the school.

Your teachers and governors are trying hard to make the school even better. There are some areas where we think that improvements could be made. There are times when your teachers could expect more from you and give you more opportunity to use your ICT skills in other subjects. We also feel that teachers could set you more challenging targets. Finally, staff and governors need to make sure they are clear about what works best to help you learn and whether the changes they have introduced are making a difference to you.

We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Martin Beale Lead Inspector