



St Andrew's CofE VA Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122017
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292293
Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006
Reporting inspector Andrew Mcdowall HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ecton Brook Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Ecton Brook
Age range of pupils	4–11		Northampton NN3 5EN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01604 406486
Number on roll (school)	193	Fax number	01604 407295
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	L Brett
		Headteacher	D Cushing
Date of previous school inspection	12 February 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006	Inspection number 292293
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Andrew's opened as a Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School in September 2003, having formerly been Great Billing Lower School. In September 2005, it moved to Ecton Brook in Northampton onto the site of the former Ecton Brook Lower School where the buildings had been extensively renovated to accommodate the whole primary age range. The school is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils' eligible for free school meals and the number of pupils with learning difficulties is lower than average. There is a higher proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups than in most schools but the number who speak English as an additional language is average. The headteacher had been in post for a year at the time of the inspection.

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 the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to subject leadership and raising achievement in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 and in science throughout the school.

The overall effectiveness of this school is inadequate. The quality of teaching in the school and subject leadership have not been effective in ensuring all pupils make satisfactory progress in their work. There is capacity to improve because the new headteacher is providing good leadership and the governors are now monitoring the work of the school more closely. On taking up her appointment at the school the headteacher quickly recognised there was underachievement and has started to bring about necessary improvements to the quality of teaching and learning, which are now satisfactory. Achievement is unsatisfactory because standards in science are too low. Progress is too patchy in Years 3 to 6 particularly for boys in writing and middle attaining girls in mathematics. The pupils get off to a good start and make satisfactory progress in the Reception class. The school now has an effective system for checking on the progress of each pupil and action is being taken to bring about improvement where progress is not good enough. Staff have received training on assessment and this is having a positive impact on achievement as pupils are now more involved in assessing their own learning. Procedures relating to pupils with learning difficulties have improved and support staff are now better deployed to meet the needs of these pupils. The governors have responded well to a critical report from the local authority in February 2006. They are now better informed about achievement and this is enabling them to hold the school to account for its performance.

Some staff have found the recent changes challenging, which has resulted in some staffing and communication difficulties. The staff are receiving clear and appropriate feedback on what they need to do to improve. However, the school needs to ensure it celebrates what is good practice, as well as identifying areas for improvement. The school has an accurate view of its performance. The pupils say they enjoy school and arrangements for keeping them safe are good. Behaviour is satisfactory and relationships between staff and pupils in the school are positive. The great majority of parents are happy with the new school building and feel they are kept informed about school life and the progress their children are making.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science and ensure pupils make at least expected progress in English and mathematics in all classes.
- Improve the quality and impact of subject leadership.
- Ensure teachers provide more active and enjoyable learning experiences for the pupils and increase the pace of lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement and standards are inadequate overall. Standards and progress are satisfactory at the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 but inadequate in Years 3 to 5.

In recent years the standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 2 have been just above average. Results in the national tests for Year 6 pupils rose in 2006. This group of pupils made good progress in Year 6 as a result of concentrated booster support in English and mathematics. Results in science improved slightly, but they are still low. This improved progress is not evident in Years 3, 4 and 5 where standards are below average, and pupils' progress has been too slow. Throughout the school, girls are performing better than boys in English and boys are performing better than girls in mathematics. The progress of pupils from minority ethnic groups mirrors this general picture. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The personal development of the pupils is satisfactory. The great majority of the pupils get on well together and say they enjoy school. Most pupils behave well in lessons but there is some inattentiveness when pupils are not actively involved in their learning. The school promotes healthy living; the pupils have a sound understanding of what constitutes healthy eating and have opportunities to take regular exercise in lessons and school clubs. The tuck shop provides healthy snacks and is much appreciated by the pupils. The school council is becoming established and has been instrumental in some changes in the school such as the increased lunchtime and after school clubs. A few pupils feel that their views are not being listened to sufficiently.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Assemblies and church celebrations contribute well to pupils' spiritual development. However, the teaching does not do enough to develop a sense of wonder in the pupils. Links with the church enable pupils to develop a sound understanding of their place in the local community, and their involvement in fund raising activities to aid people in Kenya gives them insight into other cultures overseas.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of the teaching and learning is now satisfactory and this is having a positive effect on pupils' progress throughout the school. Lesson planning is improving because teachers are getting better at assessment and as a result they are planning appropriate learning activities for the pupils. The teachers are involving the pupils more in their

learning. Consequently, the pupils are clearer about what is expected of them during lessons and progress is improving. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good where the lessons are lively and teachers use a range of strategies to interest and engage the pupils. Lessons sometimes start too slowly and some lessons fail to give pupils the opportunity to actively participate in discussion. At times they spend too much time listening to their teacher or waiting for others to answer questions. As a result, some pupils lack real enthusiasm for their work. Pupils fail to make progress in some lessons because learning is pitched at the wrong level. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give appropriate feedback on where they have succeeded in their learning, and some good points for improvement are made. This is not always helping the pupils to improve their work, as some teachers do not give the pupils time to read the comments and make the suggested improvements. Teaching assistants work well with the teachers and make a positive contribution pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. A recent review undertaken by the staff has ensured there is better progression in subjects and no duplication of work. The number and range of school clubs have increased recently and are now satisfactory. The school provides good opportunities for the pupils to participate in residential visits and this makes a positive contribution to their social development. The curriculum is being strengthened by staff training, which is helping pupils with learning difficulties, or those making slow progress, catch up in their work. There are insufficient links across the curriculum to ensure pupils have opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy and speaking and listening skills in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The quality of care, guidance and support provided by the school is satisfactory. Good attention is paid to the health and safety of pupils. Risk assessments are carried out and child protection procedures are known to all staff. The learning mentor is providing good support for pupils who have poor self-esteem or problems with behaviour. Pupils join the homework club for support with homework and to have an opportunity to use the internet. A newly appointed family support worker is adding further capacity to the care and support of pupils. Less attention has been paid to supporting and guiding pupils in setting and reviewing targets. Consequently, they are not clear as to how they can improve their work in the longer term.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Prompt action has been taken to resolve difficult personnel and staffing issues. The increased expectations of the headteacher have presented a considerable challenge to the staff as they had

previously not known that standards were too low in the school. Most staff recognise the improvements that have been made since the new headteacher was appointed. The teaching assistants and some teaching staff report that they are now clearer about what is expected of them in supporting the school's drive to raise standards. Together, the governors, headteacher and staff at the school effectively managed the move to new premises and established appropriate systems and procedures to keep pupils safe.

The governing body has improved its ways of working and now provides satisfactory support and challenge to the school. The poor financial planning of recent years has resulted in the school overspending its budget. Action has been taken to address this and the school is currently bringing financial management under control.

Subject leadership is inadequate. At present the subject leaders have not been trained and have had little opportunity to fulfil their responsibilities for monitoring the work of the school. Consequently, the headteacher is carrying too heavy a load in this regard.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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?	3
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	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	4

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	4
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

I would like to start by saying a big thank you to you all for being so helpful to us when we visited your school recently.

At present we feel your school is not doing as well as it should, because standards in science are too low and some of you are not making the progress you should in Years 3 to 6. The good news is your school is improving and changes that have been made in the last year are making things better. Your headteacher and the governors know what to do to continue to improve the school. All the staff at the school care about you and work hard to keep you safe. Like you we think the number of lunchtime and after school clubs is improving and you have good opportunities to go on residential visits. You told us you enjoy school but we feel you would enjoy it even more if some of your lessons were more lively and interesting.

To make your school better we have asked the school to:

- make sure all of you improve your work in science and improve the progress some of you make in literacy and numeracy
- arrange some more training for the teachers so they can help the headteacher in checking that everything is as good as it can be in the school
- improve some of your lessons to make them more lively and interesting.