



St Andrew's School (Rochester)

Independent School

Inspection report

DfES Registration Number 887/6002
Unique Reference Number 118985
Inspection number 296867
Inspection dates 31 January 2007 - 1 February 2007
Reporting inspector Steffi Penny HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005).

Age group 3-11	Published 26 February 2007	Reference no. 296867
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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Information about the school

St. Andrew's School was founded in 1951 and ten years later, under the ownership of Commander Henry Starkie, moved to its present site on Watts Avenue close to the centre of Rochester. In 1999, the school changed its ownership and now belongs to CfBT Education Trust. The school operates from two sites; the main school is in Watts Avenue and the pre-school is situated nearby in St Margaret's Street. The main school was last inspected on 20 June 2002 and the pre-school was last inspected on 7 February 2006.

St. Andrew's School has a non-selective academic entry and the majority of pupils join from the pre-school as rising five year olds. The school's aim is 'to develop well-rounded, enthusiastic learners who will make a strong contribution to their senior schools both as good citizens and as pupils who are prepared to work hard in order to achieve success.' There are a small number of pupils who have moderate learning difficulties and specific learning needs.

Evaluation of the school

St Andrew's is a good school where pupils develop positive attitudes about themselves and towards learning. The school's ethos engenders a friendly atmosphere in a professional learning environment. The school has a strong culture for promoting and celebrating the achievement and progress made by its pupils. The high standards set and clear vision for the school's continued development are assured by the effective partnership between the principal and the current owners. Progress in areas since the last inspection is good. The school meets nearly all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

Quality of education

The school provides a good quality of education. The approaches taken to develop and cater for pupils' social and academic skills are well balanced and effective. The curriculum incorporates all areas of the National Curriculum, including German and French. It is good, broad and coherent. It is enhanced by a good programme of enrichment activities which includes after school clubs, residential visits, visitors, challenge days and out of school activities. These create a high level of pupil interest and encourage them to develop a broad

range of skills. The school is aware that whilst pupils do have a broad general knowledge of institutions and services in England through study in various subjects it is an area of knowledge that could be developed further. A small minority of parents are concerned about the amount of physical exercise that their infant children undertake. They only have one physical exercise lesson a week, with a specialist teacher, which is rather limited. However, breaks and lunch times provide good opportunities for pupils to take physical exercise, which they do with gusto.

The quality of teaching is generally good and sometimes outstanding. As a result the pupils make good progress. In lessons, the content is pitched at the right level with good attention to pupils' ages and abilities. In the very best lessons a range of teaching methods is used so that pupils remain engaged and fully focused on their work. They are also sharply focussed on the lesson objectives drawing from a depth of knowledge that fully explains the relevance of what is being learned. The school has an appropriate marking policy and marking codes but they are not consistently deployed throughout the school. When used effectively, they result in very good diagnostic marking which helps the pupils to identify their strengths and areas for further improvement. The school makes comprehensive assessments of the pupils' progress. These are not always used as sharply as they might be to help teachers develop specific targets for each pupil in all subjects.

Pupils' progress is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are supported very well. They are able to make good progress due to the high quality of support that they receive. They have individual education plans that are well suited to their needs.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good. It is successfully promoted through the relationships they have with staff and the good interactions they have with each other. Pupils are well aware of their responsibilities and older children have good opportunities to take responsibility within the school in order to promote independence and self-discipline. They do this through acting as class captains, prefects, monitors and house captains. The newly elected school's council demonstrates how the school is working to extend these opportunities, and plans to incorporate younger pupils too.

As well as being effectively prepared for their future lives, pupils are encouraged to demonstrate what they can do best. This is clearly exhibited in the high quality of art work celebrated around the school reflecting the many different cultures that they have explored. The pupils learn to have concern for those less fortunate than themselves. They demonstrate this through

supporting charities and engagement with other good causes. They are often the driving force deciding on the best way to support their chosen causes by planning and organising fundraising activities and events.

Pupils say that they enjoy school. Their view is supported by the high attendance rate, their good behaviour and attitudes to learning. Many pupils stay in touch with the school after they have left.

Welfare, health and safety of the pupils

Arrangements to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are good. The school effectively promotes the welfare of all its pupils. It has a full range of policies and practices that minimise the health and safety risks to pupils. Pupils are carefully supervised at all times and are safeguarded around the school and on educational trips and visits. Child protection procedures are robust.

Pupils demonstrate through discussion that they understand and know how to keep healthy and follow healthy lifestyles. However, sometimes they forget and bring crisps and chocolate in their break and lunch boxes. The school plans to conduct a parental survey in order to reconsider the current policy.

Although detailed and accurate central records are kept, a minority of the daily attendance registers are not maintained in accordance with regulations due to the use of pencil marks and correction fluid.

The school meets its responsibilities to provide access to the school and the curriculum for pupils who have disabilities.

Suitability of the proprietor and staff

The school undertakes the full range of checks to ensure the suitability of all staff to work with children and young people.

School's premises and accommodation

The school is spread across three levels of three Victorian houses; much has been done since the last visit to update the fabric and appearance of the school. This includes recarpeting, redecoration, conversion and extension of some rooms along with other minor building works. Consequently the school provides a pleasant and well presented learning environment. The school is aware that they do not have the required separate sick room with a bed, and that ventilation in some rooms is not adequate, for example in the new ICT suite. The size of each room is constrained and cannot be altered due to planning restrictions and some rooms are rather cramped. The school is in the process of applying for planning permission to redress these issues. During the

inspection it was noted that the hot water supplying both basins in two lavatories, one for girls and another for male staff, was too hot.

The school has planned well to increase accessibility and is in the process of drawing up another plan to review the possibility of further improving access.

Provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school provides a good range of information for parents, pupils, carers and others on request, that comply with all of the relevant regulations. Responses to the parents' questionnaire indicate that the majority of parents consider that they are well informed about their children's progress at school. For example, parents of junior pupils are aware of how well their child is performing against national benchmarks through the optional tests that the school uses.

Procedures for handling complaints

The school's complaints procedure meets all the requirements for registration. The complaints procedures are clear and fair. A small minority of parents indicated through the questionnaire that they are unaware of the complaints procedure.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- maintain attendance registers in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (paragraph 3(9)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the premises and accommodation (standard 5) and must:

- provide a hot water supply in all washrooms that meets the requirements of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(a))
- provide appropriate facilities for pupils who are ill, in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(l))

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- ensure ventilation in the classrooms and other parts of the school is satisfactory and in accordance with the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 (paragraph 5(p)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- increase the amount of curriculum time for physical education for the infants
- ensure that all marking helps the pupils to identify their strengths and areas for further improvement
- use assessments to provide specific learning targets for all pupils in all subjects
- provide younger pupils with increased opportunities to participate in decision-making.

School details

Name of school	St Andrew's School (Rochester)
DfES number	887/6002
Unique reference number	118985
Type of school	Day school
Status	Independent
Date school opened	1951
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 155 Girls: 137 Total: 292
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,263.42 - £4,509.54
Address of school	St Andrew's School (Rochester) 24 - 28 Watts Avenue Rochester Kent ME1 1SA
Telephone number	01634 843479
Fax number	01634 840789
Email address	jjabbour@cfbt.com
Headteacher	Mrs Joan Jabbour
Proprietor	CFBT Education Trust
Reporting inspector	Steffi Penny HMI
Dates of inspection	31 January - 1 February 2007