

St Andrew's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114188
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	301687
Inspection dates	1–2 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Waine (Vice chair)
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Yates
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2003
School address	St Andrew's Road Bishop Auckland County Durham DL14 6RY
Telephone number	01388 605385
Fax number	01388 605385

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Almost all the pupils at this smaller than average sized school are from White British backgrounds. It serves a mixed community that includes an area of considerable social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A higher than average percentage of pupils join or leave the school partway through their primary education. The school has recently been accredited with the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards, and an Impetus award which recognises the school's commitment to citizenship education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Andrew's Primary is a satisfactory and improving school which has some good features. It provides satisfactory value for money. The good level of care for pupils is seen in the way that staff nurture them well, provide a happy, safe and secure place for them to learn and ensure that they make a strong contribution to their school and local communities. Parents are pleased with the changes made since the appointment of the headteacher and think highly of the quality of education their children receive. They particularly appreciate all that the school does to ensure that their children enjoy school, especially the wonderful range of extra-curricular activities on offer. Pupils' good personal development provides a positive platform on which to improve their academic achievement and to prepare them to become responsible citizens of the future.

Pupils make satisfactory progress from a below average starting point so that standards remain below average by Year 6. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage (Reception class). This is because of good quality teaching and learning and a stimulating and lively curriculum which is matched well to children's learning needs, allowing them to develop an early thirst for learning. Between Years 1 and 6 (Class 2 to Class 5), pupils make only satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching and learning and a satisfactory curriculum. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly to find out what they can do. They use this information well to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities get the support they need in order to make good progress. Similar information is not always used effectively enough to meet the learning needs of the more able pupils who could sometimes achieve more than teachers expect of them.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have set the school on a clear pathway of improvement. Their vision, hard work and determination are starting to pay off. Staff and governors share this vision and welcome opportunities for professional development, keen to try out their newly acquired skills. Recent initiatives aimed at improving the quality of provision in English, for example, are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Standards in English improved significantly in 2007 compared to the previous year. However, achievement and standards in mathematics are still too low.

Effective partnerships with external organisations, other schools and within the locality are contributing strongly to school improvement. Despite the positive changes that are taking place, there remains a lot to do, particularly to improve the quality of teaching and learning. A clear management structure is in place, but the roles of some staff in checking pupils' progress and evaluating school improvement are unclear. Little management experience also limits some staff's ability to be fully involved in school self-evaluation. Nevertheless, the school has an accurate view of its overall effectiveness and this, along with the satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, demonstrates that it has a satisfactory capacity to improve in the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children start Reception, their skills, although variable from year to year, are below what is typical for their age, and their communication, language and literacy skills are often very weak. Good leadership and management ensure a good quality of teaching and learning and a

lively and stimulating curriculum. Teachers and support staff work together closely to use assessment information well to ensure that activities match children's varying learning needs closely. As a result, children develop a love of learning and make good progress so that by the beginning of Year 1 they reach close to the levels expected for their age. However, although children make good progress in developing their communication, language and literacy skills, they remain below expected levels. Staff sometimes miss good opportunities to use activities outdoors to promote language learning. Nevertheless, children's progress in personal, social and emotional development is particularly marked. This is because adults make the most of almost every opportunity to help children to get along well together, talk about their learning, grow in confidence and behave well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and accelerate progress in mathematics across the school.
- Use assessment information to plan work that closely matches pupils' differing learning needs, especially those of the more able.
- Clarify the roles and extend the skills of staff with management responsibilities so that they can accurately monitor pupils' progress and contribute to the school's evaluation of its performance.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards by Year 6 are below average. In the 2007 assessments at the end of Year 2, standards were below average. Although they were slightly lower than in 2006, a higher proportion of pupils had learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the results represent satisfactory progress from the pupils' low starting points. Standards in reading and writing, however, were higher than in mathematics where they were significantly below average. Between Years 3 and 6, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. Unconfirmed results of the 2007 Year 6 national tests were the highest for five years. Following a whole-school development focus, there was a significant improvement in English, where results had been significantly below average in 2006. However, achievement and standards in mathematics are still too low. The school met its targets for English in 2007 but did not do so in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they have good support in lessons to complete work that is matched carefully to their individual learning needs. More able pupils do not always make progress at a sufficiently good rate because there are not enough opportunities for them to show what they are capable of.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils are polite and behave well because they have a good understanding of the consequences of their actions. They enjoy school and explain that they are keen to do their best because their achievements are valued highly and celebrated regularly. Pupils make a good contribution to their school and local communities. Older pupils show their growing maturity and confidence by helping with duties around school. Pupils' good

understanding of why they should adopt healthy lifestyles is seen in their enthusiasm for taking part in sporting and other physical activities such as gymnastics and table tennis. Pupils' growing personal and social skills, along with satisfactory progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, prepare them soundly for secondary school and for becoming responsible young adults. Attendance is satisfactory and, as a result of hard work involving parents and pupils, it is showing signs of improvement.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

As a result of satisfactory teaching and learning, pupils in Years 1 to 6 make satisfactory progress. Good organisation, clear explanations of lesson objectives, positive relationships and effective management of pupils' behaviour are strong features of most lessons. Teachers assess pupils regularly to find out what they can already do. They use this information well to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those whose learning needs an extra boost, get the support they need to achieve well. However, they sometimes do not challenge more able pupils to build sufficiently well on their existing skills to demonstrate what they are capable of. Staff have responded with enthusiasm to opportunities to improve their teaching, for example by discussing learning targets with pupils and using marking as a means of helping them to improve. Although staff are becoming increasingly confident in following these improved practices, there remain inconsistencies that sometimes hinder the development of pupils' skills as learners.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress. A good range of activities beyond the normal school day, such as Spanish, drama and gymnastics, make a strong contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because staff adjust the curriculum to take account of their learning needs. Good partnerships with other schools and the community provide an increasing number of opportunities for the more able pupils to respond to new challenges, although these pupils do not always have such opportunities as part of day-to-day provision. A wide range of support programmes to boost learning in English reflects the school's priority to raise standards in this subject. In mathematics, however, support programmes are limited and pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to practise their basic numeracy skills through problem solving and investigative work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. High quality care ensures that pupils are happy, safe and secure. Pupils say that there is always someone to approach if they are worried. Required procedures for protecting and safeguarding pupils are in place. The school gives high priority to meeting the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with social and emotional needs. The school's learning mentor, parent support workers and staff from outside agencies work together closely to ensure that the pupils and their parents benefit from the right kind of support. Parents of pupils who join the school partway through

their primary education say that their children settle in particularly well. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils are beginning to understand how good their writing is because teachers sometimes refer to their learning targets in lessons and when they mark pupils' work. These are recent developments, however, and practice is inconsistent. These developments have not yet been extended to other subjects such as mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher make a significant contribution to improving the school by selecting priorities for action carefully. As a result of a rigorous approach to tackling weaknesses in English, for example, standards are rising and there is a determination to address the dip in standards in mathematics. Improving the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning also remains a high priority despite recent improvements. Governors and teachers with management responsibilities are keen to make a greater contribution, but their precise roles and involvement are not yet agreed. As a result, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have to oversee much of the work. They are also the major contributors to the school's self-evaluation. This limits the pace at which things can move forward. Nevertheless, the school has accurately evaluated its effectiveness and identified the right priorities for action. Satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection provide a positive platform upon which to build and give the school a satisfactory capacity for improvement.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	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.

Annex A

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

3 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's Primary School, Durham, DL14 6RY

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I particularly enjoyed being part of your assembly and seeing how proud you are of the certificates and rewards you get to celebrate your achievements. I also enjoyed hearing Class 4 performing the song about 'birds of prey' that has recently been recorded for a radio broadcast.

Your behaviour was good and it was pleasing to hear that you feel safe in school because there is always someone on hand, either an adult or a 'buddy', if you need help. All the adults care about you. They help you to grow in confidence, so that you are prepared for going to secondary school at the end of Year 6. It is good to know that you enjoy coming to school and I can see why so many of you take part in after school activities. You have more chances to attend clubs than children in most other schools, especially the younger children.

Although your school is a satisfactory school, some things are good. Your learning gets off to a good start in the Reception class. There are many good things happening to help you to reach similar standards by Year 6 to the standards reached by children in most other schools. Your parents have noticed the changes that the school has made recently and are pleased about them. There are some things that could still be better. Some of you told me that you sometimes find your work too easy and I agree with you that it is. The school is going to help you to learn faster, especially in mathematics, by taking more notice of what you can already do and by always giving you work that makes you think hard. All the staff are going to work together in keeping a close eye on how quickly you are learning and how you could do better.

You can help your school to become even better by making sure that you tell your teacher if your work is too easy for you. You should keep checking all the time what you still have to do to get better at your work and, of course, continue to try your very best in everything that you do.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Dodd

Additional Inspector