

St Andrew's CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School, Totteridge

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101327
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	307650
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	206
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robert McDougall
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Lockham
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Green Totteridge London N20 8NX
Telephone number	020 8445 6157

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This popular average-sized school has Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the Reception class. Over half the pupils on roll come from a wide variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Most of these speak English as an additional language; 33 different languages are spoken in all. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. These include speech and language difficulties. The school has the Healthy School and Activemark awards. The headteacher has been in post just under a year.

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 is a satisfactory school that is entering a new phase of its development under the effective leadership of its recently appointed headteacher. Parents welcome the vision and direction she is bringing to the school. One, speaking for many, commented, 'We have been very pleased with the changes the new headteacher has made during her first year.' Standards are above average overall and high in mathematics. Pupils make generally satisfactory progress from their starting points, but not enough of them reach the higher levels in Year 2 and Year 6 in writing. This is because there is insufficient challenge in the tasks set to motivate pupils to scale the heights of their imaginations.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good elements. While subject knowledge is good, lessons are conducted in too formal a manner, with the emphasis on teaching rather than on learning. Tasks do not always match pupils' needs sufficiently closely, especially for the more able. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but lacks sparkle and is not geared as closely to pupils' needs as it could be. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their independence through taking part in practical activities. There is good enrichment, with pupils enjoying visits to places of interest and plenty of visitors to the school. Pupils take part in a wide range of clubs, which contribute well to their good personal development and well-being. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and take plenty of exercise, including special events such as a fun run, or skipping for charity. Attendance is good, and pupils behave well. They shoulder responsibilities well, such as membership of the school council and acting as road safety officers. Pupils visit the church regularly, and are involved in their local community. They leave the school with good basic skills, well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The headteacher has made several important changes since her appointment, including introducing a consistent approach to lesson planning, and sharpening up assessment procedures. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully, and extra help is given to those who are at risk of falling behind. A programme of training has given teaching assistants the skills and confidence to make a difference in providing this support. The headteacher has identified the key things that need to improve, and has worked effectively with staff to implement new strategic plans that are focused on raising achievement. Many of the initiatives, such as a new marking policy, have been recently introduced, and it is too early to see their full impact on provision. The pastoral care of pupils is good, with strong links with other agencies to give additional support and advice, such as speech therapy. Academic guidance is satisfactory. All pupils have targets for improvement, but not all of them know much about them, or have been sufficiently involved in setting them.

Since the last inspection, there have been some improvements to the building, but classrooms are still far too small and a long-running debate over the development of the site continues, which severely restricts what the school can do. For example, there is no outdoor area for the Early Years Foundation Stage because of restrictions applied by a local Trust to the playground. Many of the resources are tired and out of date, and the desks are not of a suitable size or design to accommodate pupils' needs adequately.

Governors are supportive of the school, and are beginning to take on their monitoring role, although vacancies exist for link governors in key subjects. The pace of improvement has increased with the arrival of the new headteacher, and the school has a satisfactory capacity to build on this.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children start in the Reception class with skills and abilities that are generally above those usually expected. Children's personal development and well-being are good, as they work and play together well. They are able to talk articulately about what they are doing. Children loved watching the chicks hatch and this provided moments of awe and wonder. There is a satisfactory range of activities for them to enjoy, although there is no direct access to the outside and no designated outside area. Staff do the best they can to provide temporary arrangements for the children in the hall or in the playground, but this requires considerable organisation and supervision. Children make satisfactory progress from their starting points, mostly exceeding the early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching is satisfactory, with planning across all areas of learning. Occasionally, questioning does not challenge the more able children sufficiently to extend their thinking. Careful records are kept of what children know and can do, although these are kept filed away and there are no portfolios that children could access and discuss. This means some opportunities are missed to involve children in reviewing their learning. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, with staff working closely together to provide a safe and stimulating learning environment, within the constraints of a classroom that is far too small.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in writing to the higher levels by providing a wider range of opportunities to stimulate pupils' interest and motivation.
- Improve teaching and learning so that all lessons are at least good by ensuring that tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities, especially for the more able.
- Make the curriculum more creative and relevant by involving pupils actively in their learning and promoting their independence.
- Improve the range and quality of the school's resources to provide the space and facilities required for giving pupils an appropriate modern education.

A small proportion of the 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

Pupils reach standards that are always above average and sometimes high by the end of Year 6, especially in mathematics. This is because subject knowledge is good and there is a greater emphasis on practical learning in mathematics than in other subjects. In other year groups, standards are generally above average. Overall, achievement is satisfactory from starting points above national expectations. A significant number of parents felt that their children could achieve more, especially the more able. This is certainly the case in writing, where only a broadly average proportion of pupils attained the higher Level 3 at the end of Year 2 in 2008 national assessments. Fewer pupils than expected attained the higher Level 5 at the end of Year 6 too. The range of writing tasks does not sufficiently challenge the more able pupils. The school has begun to target pupils who are capable of reaching Level 3 to move them forward more rapidly, but this work is at an early stage. Pupils who find learning more difficult now receive timely

support and are making satisfactory progress. Those pupils at the earliest stages of learning English also make sound progress as a result of being given additional help.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show one another respect and generally behave well. They are amazingly tolerant considering the very cramped working conditions. Their understanding of how to make healthy choices has been recognised with a Healthy School Award, and their active lifestyles merited the Activemark award. A pupil said, 'The school is sporty and raises lots of money for charity.' Many of the pupils walk to school, and collect attractive badges to mark their commitment to this scheme. Pupils say that they feel safe and would turn to an adult if they had a worry. Pupils enjoy many aspects of their school life, although they sometimes find the work too easy. They support one another as 'buddies' and have a say through the school council. They take an active part in village events such as the summer fete, the flower show and the Remembrance Day commemoration. They play other schools at sport and participate in music and dance festivals. Pupils do well academically at school and grow in confidence. They do not, however, have sufficient opportunities to develop their independence through the curriculum.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Planning is consistent across the school, with clear learning objectives for each lesson. Teaching is characterised by a good grasp of the subject, but tends to impart knowledge rather than allowing pupils to find things out for themselves. A pupil said, 'They teach us a lot' rather than 'We learn a lot.' Class management is effective, and pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are eager to please, and willingly participate even when the pace of the lesson is rather pedestrian. There is a fairly narrow use of teaching strategies, with the emphasis on whole-class teaching and some group work. More use could be made of pupils as partners discussing their learning together. Not enough of the teaching is good or better, resulting in generally satisfactory progress. Where teaching is more vibrant and moves at a faster pace, pupils' learning accelerates, and there is greater enjoyment. While most lessons adapt the tasks to take into account pupils' different abilities, this is not done precisely enough and does not sufficiently challenge the more able pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets requirements and enables pupils to attain above-average standards. However, it is formally structured and does not take sufficient account of pupils' interests and aptitudes. Many of the resources are tired and out of date, and not enough use is made of information and communication technology to make links across subjects. There is, however, good enrichment, with opportunities for pupils to go on a wide variety of trips, and many visitors, such as theatre groups, come to the school. Recalling a night spent at the Science Museum, a pupil said, 'We slept in the galleries - it was so exciting!' A good range of clubs includes Spanish, drama and science. The curriculum is generally inclusive, although more could be done to adapt it to suit the specific needs of pupils learning English as an additional language.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils receive a good level of care and are known as individuals. The safeguarding procedures required by government are in place. The success of the programme of training for teaching assistants, introduced by the new headteacher, means that they are able to provide specific support with increasing confidence. They are aided by the school's good links with outside agencies. There is satisfactory provision for pupils who find learning difficult, including those with speech and language difficulties. Pupils' individual education plans clearly state how they can be supported, but not everybody is fully conversant with them. There is some variability in the effectiveness of academic guidance. The marking policy is very new and not consistently applied. Pupils have targets for improvement, but not all of them can remember them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has brought decisive leadership and a clear focus on raising achievement. She has rightly concentrated on what needs improving most, making systems for tracking pupils' progress more effective, bringing consistency to lesson planning and taking steps to improve writing. She has made expectations clear, and is holding staff increasingly to account for pupils' progress. There is still plenty to be done. Too much of the teaching is satisfactory, and too much of the provision is formal. The school knows what it does well and how it must improve, and strategic plans reflect this. However, some of the estimations of the school's effectiveness have relied too much on above-average standards and not on the underlying provision, which is only satisfactory. The school's contribution to promoting community cohesion is satisfactory, with good use of the hall by the community. Pupils are less clear about life in other parts of the United Kingdom. A useful link has been established with a school in South Africa. Staff and pupils work in a building that is totally unsuited to modern education, with cramped conditions, outmoded furniture and too many restrictions imposed from outside on the use of the site. This rightly concerns a good many parents.

The headteacher is developing the skills of other leaders, with opportunities for monitoring, including observing lessons. The emphasis is on coming to shared judgements, and staff are very willing to take on new responsibilities. Governors support the school, and ask searching questions, but do not have a systematic approach to monitoring its work.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

20 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School, Totteridge, London, N20 8NX

Thank you for welcoming us to your school, which provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. These are some of its strengths.

- You reach above-average standards, and do particularly well in mathematics.
- You show respect for one another and generally behave well.
- You have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and lead active lives.
- There are plenty of clubs, visits and visitors for you to enjoy.
- The school takes care of you well, especially if you have a worry.
- Your new headteacher has brought some good ideas to help the school improve.

We think you could do better in writing and have asked your teachers to give you really exciting things to write about. We believe you could take a more active part in your learning, and want the work set to be just at the right level for you. We have asked your teachers to find ways that make you more independent. I am sure they would welcome your ideas about how you might achieve this. We think your school building is far too cramped and that many resources need renewing. We also think the Reception children need their own outdoor area to work and play in.

Thank you once again for being so friendly. Our very best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mr N Butt

Lead Inspector