

# St Andrew The Apostle Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104470
<b>Local Authority</b>	Knowsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	308609
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clare Henderson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	248
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mark Helme
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jan Cunningham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	Higher Road Halewood Liverpool Merseyside L26 1TD
<b>Telephone number</b>	1051 288 8940
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 486 5342

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school. It serves a community which has relatively high levels of social and economic disadvantage. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average, as is the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Andrew the Apostle is a good school with outstanding features. Major factors in its success are the excellent leadership of the headteacher and commitment of all staff. This leadership is based on teamwork and excellent partnerships with parents and the local community. Parents are unanimous in their appreciation of what the school provides and typical comments are, 'there is a lovely family atmosphere, staff really care about the children's welfare and education,' and again, 'a great school which encourages children to achieve their potential'.

Most pupils begin Year 1 with skills that are below those typically expected. Standards reached by Year 6 pupils in 2007 in English were broadly average, and below average in mathematics and science. This represents good achievement in relation to pupils' starting points. The school is very welcoming and eager to enable all pupils to achieve their best, and all staff work hard to remove any barriers to learning. This is evident in the kind, patient and understanding way in which pupils are treated. In particular, the extent to which those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported, emotionally and academically, is outstanding and accounts for their good progress.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, although in a few lessons it is satisfactory rather than good. This is because information gathered from assessments is not always used well enough to plan work to match pupils' learning needs. The outstanding level of care, support and guidance provided, together with encouragement for pupils to evaluate and improve their own learning, is instrumental in forging good progress and pupils' outstanding personal development. The curriculum is good with excellent enrichment opportunities.

Pupils are very proud of their school and say, 'all our teachers and support staff really care for us'. The spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. Their clear enjoyment of school is reflected in their good behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. They feel safe and know there is someone to talk to if they have a problem. They are very aware of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle and understand the reasons why it is important to have a healthy diet and do plenty of exercise. As a result of the excellent work of the learning mentor, attendance has improved in the last year and is currently above average. Pupils' improved literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, together with their well developed sense of community, prepare them well for their future lives.

Good leadership and management have ensured that all previous inspection issues have been addressed. The clear vision of the headteacher on school improvement is shared by all staff. However, there have been recent changes in middle managers responsible for curriculum subjects and the involvement of these staff in monitoring and evaluating the progress pupils make is underdeveloped. Consequently, middle managers have a limited view of the progress pupils make year-on-year. The school's mostly accurate, though, at times, overly modest self-evaluation shows that the school knows itself well and contributes to sustained improvement. Governance is of a good quality with all legal requirements met. As such, the school provides good value for money and is in a good position to improve even further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

When children begin in the Nursery, their skills are below those typical at this age for some, and for a significant number, well below expected levels. This is particularly so in their

mathematical, speaking and listening and social development. The bright and stimulating environment ensures that children quickly develop a real interest and enjoyment of learning. Adults pay close attention to ensuring each child's individual learning needs are quickly identified and addressed. They make the most of every opportunity to help children learn to get along well together, grow in confidence and behave well. As a result, children make excellent progress. By the time they start Year 1, though some are still below expected levels in some skills, many are working towards the goals expected at their age. Staff give high priority to the teaching of letters and sounds and particularly for the more able children. As a result, children make significant progress in this aspect of their learning. Leadership and management in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. The lead practitioner plays a crucial role in this. As a member of the school management team she ensures that detailed consideration of the progress children make whilst in the Foundation Stage is used effectively to set children's next learning, particularly as they move into Year 1. Staff communicate regularly with each other and establish excellent links with parents. Very good use is made of the information staff record about the small day-to-day steps in children's progress which helps children to build on what they can already do.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make better use of assessment information in lesson planning, so that work set consistently matches pupils' needs.
- Ensure that middle managers are fully involved in monitoring and evaluating the work within their subject areas.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Throughout Years 1 and 2 pupils achieve well. Currently, pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, and particularly the more able, are making good progress to reach challenging targets and are achieving broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. This is a result of initiatives put in place to improve the problem solving, thinking and science investigation skills of pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same good progress as their classmates, as a result of the well considered support they receive in lessons.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils say that they thoroughly enjoy school and the learning opportunities it provides. They greatly value opportunities to express their views and the many chances they are given to represent their school, for example, as school councillors, playground leaders or prefects. They take these responsibilities very seriously; for example, leading the daily 'shake and wake' sessions at the breakfast club, or raising money to provide for those they believe are less fortunate than themselves. The school's strong caring, moral ethos is reflected in the outstanding ways that pupils respect and understand the feelings of others. Behaviour is good overall. Those whose behaviour is less good respond well to the school's well planned attempts to help them behave better. Attendance is currently above average, with excellent systems to check absences so that any problems can be tackled effectively. Although pupils in Year 6 say they do not want to leave, they feel that their school gives them good opportunities to prepare for high school and beyond. They feel safe and value the school's work to help them understand the need for rules, recognise risks and appreciate healthy eating.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers and support staff know their pupils well and work closely together to support them in all aspects of their learning. As a result, pupils make good progress in lessons and thrive on their success. In the best lessons, pupils are fully engaged and their achievement is excellent. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows or work does not meet pupils' learning needs. This is because not enough use is made of assessment information when planning lessons. At these times, teaching is less effective because work set does not always match pupils' needs, and they do not progress at the same good rate. A wide range of very effective intervention programmes delivered by highly motivated and well qualified support staff ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enjoy learning and make good progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good with outstanding features. The school is introducing a new curriculum programme to give pupils the chance to apply their literacy, numeracy, and ICT skills across a range of subjects in a more creative and imaginative way. However, this is at an early stage and it is too soon to measure its success in raising standards and pupils' achievement. Pupils have excellent opportunities to develop their talents through the wide choice of extra-curricular sporting, musical and creative activities on offer. Such opportunities promote pupils' fitness, health and enjoyment well. These activities have a high take-up rate and have a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and self-esteem. There is a good focus through the curriculum on developing positive attitudes to health, fitness and emotional well-being. Activities outside the classroom such as trips and residential experiences enhance the curriculum, excite pupils and inspire them in their work.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The quality of personal, social and emotional care given to pupils is outstanding, strongly reflecting the school's aims and values. The school's commitment to high quality care is demonstrated in how well each pupil is known to staff. Consequently, all are treated with respect as individuals, while at the same time learning their responsibility of care for each other. Parents share this sentiment and a view typical of many is, 'staff strive to ensure each child feels that they are valued and important to the school community'. Support for effective learning is very evident in the good use of target-setting, which underpins pupils' good achievement. The guidance and support given to those identified as gifted and talented, or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, adds great value to their learning. Pupils use helpful guidance from their teacher's comments to help them improve their work. All aspects of child protection, risk assessment procedures and other health and safety measures are in place.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership is good and the school is well managed. The headteacher has a very clear vision of what she wants pupils, staff, governors and parents to achieve. In the three years she has been headteacher, all staff have embraced this vision with enthusiasm and support. A particular strength is the excellent management of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities carried out by the acting deputy headteacher. The leadership team has a clear knowledge of the school's needs, has identified the correct priorities for improvement and set in place good action to achieve them. However, the involvement of recently appointed middle managers in checking the quality of provision within their areas of responsibility is underdeveloped. All staff take very good care of pupils and make a strong contribution to the smooth running of the school. Governors contribute well to this process. Their clear understanding of the school's work and their support for the headteacher's high aspirations enable them to give the school good guidance and challenge.

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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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

Inspection of St Andrew The Apostle Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L26 1TD

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed our time with you and seeing you in lessons, even if it was only for a short time. This is what we found out about your school. We are pleased to tell you that your school is a good school. You do well in lessons and in tests because you work hard and understand the importance of this for the future. We agree with you that your teachers and other adults make lessons interesting and that, if you need help, you get it.

Your behaviour is good overall and, for very many of you, excellent. You all benefit from the excellent care your headteacher, teachers and support staff give to you and your families. You told us that you feel safe in school and that if problems occur, an adult will sort it out quickly when you tell them about it. In very many ways you are given a super curriculum, and you have lots of opportunities to visit interesting places, work with artists and sports persons. We have asked your teachers to do two things to make your school an even better one.

- To make sure that lessons are planned so that the work is not too easy or too hard, but just at the level to help you succeed.
- To make sure that the staff in charge of the different subjects have the opportunity to keep a really close watch on your work in all these subjects.

We wish you the very best for the future and that you continue to work hard and enjoy your time at school.