

St Andrew's CofE Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105077
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	308758
Inspection dates	5–6 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Allan Torr HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Humphries
Headteacher	Mrs V Woods
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2006
School address	Townfield Lane Lower Bebington Wirral Merseyside CH63 7NL
Telephone number	0151 645 7782
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. The school was given a Notice to Improve in 2006 and has been monitored by Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Andrew's C of E is a slightly smaller than average primary school which is located in an area of average social and economic advantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly less than the national average. There are very few pupils with a statement of educational need and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Most pupils are White British. After a period of disruption, staffing has stabilised. The school was awarded Healthy School status in 2007 and the Activemark in 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

St Andrew's C of E is a good school. It has made significant improvement since the previous inspection. Decisive and effective leadership, particularly by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, is the reason for the improvement in pupils' progress. The comprehensive assessment and tracking system enables teachers to pinpoint quickly pupils' underachievement. Teachers use this information well to adapt learning programmes as well as lessons to meet pupils' individual needs. Teachers, including the headteacher, have an impressive awareness of pupils' personal circumstances and they use this knowledge well to develop a strong sense of community. There is now good capacity to improve further.

Pupils achieve well. This is in marked contrast to the previous inspection when pupils' levels of achievement were inadequate. This is primarily because over the last year, pupils have benefited from more stabilised staffing and much improved quality of teaching and learning. On entry to the Reception class, children have skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress and enter Year 1 attaining the early learning goals expected of them. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and, at the end of Year 2, standards are in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress in Key Stage 2 is consistently good because pupils are taught well and enjoy a relevant and interesting curriculum. They have the opportunity to decide on the learning themes and much innovative work has been completed to ensure that learning in one subject is built upon well in another. By Year 6, pupils reach standards that are above average. Measures taken to improve pupils' writing skills are leading to some marked gains in learning, but have not yet been fully embedded in every class. As a result, standards in writing lag behind reading. Pupils enjoy school. They commented that lessons have improved because they are more interesting and learning is more interactive. They are generally aware of their personal targets, but teachers do not use their marking consistently to inform pupils about what they need to do to improve their work. Senior leaders have successfully focused teachers' professional development, on pupil progress and on how teachers can best improve their work to enhance it. Subject leaders have only recently begun to monitor teaching and learning and to contribute to the improvement of standards in their subjects.

The school has a strong family ethos. Its commitment to the '4 Cs' - care, consideration, courtesy and Christianity - is borne out in the way that pupils are polite, well mannered, friendly and respectful. Behaviour is good and pupils are clear that it is better than at the previous inspection. They have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle through physical activity and good nutrition. As a result of excellent pastoral support, pupils feel well cared for and show depth of feeling for others. For example, a teaching assistant works well with pupils to remember those within the wider community who have died. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe, through, for example, taking care near roads and when using the Internet. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community. Older pupils act as 'buddies' to younger children and some are trained as play leaders to ensure break-times are happy and harmonious. The well established school council takes an active role in decision making at the school; for example, contributing to the appointment of teachers and sampling menus for school meals. Pupils' key skills are good. They have good opportunities to research,

collaborate and select topics that interest them. This prepares them well for their future lives in the world of work.

The headteacher sets a clear vision and direction for the school which is understood by all. Her relentless focus on improving achievement through individual support has ensured that the school prioritises the issues that matter. This has forged a strong commitment from all staff on the individual needs of pupils and increased respect for the work of the school from the wider community. Good support from the local authority, the governing body and outside agencies have provided significant support and challenge so that the school is now able to manage its own affairs with confidence. It now provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are well cared for and blossom in a secure, vibrant and comfortable environment. Children's confidence and personal and social skills are enhanced by the positive relationships with the adults. Good links with parents and pre-school providers enables the Foundation Stage teacher to have a good knowledge of each child. Workshops help parents to gain a better understanding of how their children are taught. Teaching and learning are good and this contributes to the children's flying start to school life. The curriculum is well planned. Themes, such as winter, run through all areas of provision and this enables children to make clear links between the different skills they are developing and knowledge they are learning. The class makes good use of a small covered area, but opportunities to experience a wide range of outside activities are limited.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing.
- Further develop the role of subject leaders in raising standards.
- Improve marking so that pupils are always clear about what they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In relation to their broadly average starting points, pupils' achievement and progress are good. Standards at Key Stage 1 are broadly average and improving. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were too low. This was mainly due to disruptions to learning caused by frequent staff changes and weak teaching. In the most recent national assessments at the end of Year 2, pupils' standards were in line with national averages. In mathematics, every pupil attained the expected Level 2. Standards at Key Stage 2 are above average. The legacy of underachievement highlighted in the previous inspection has largely been eradicated. Although the results in the national assessments in 2007 indicated that standards were in line with national averages, inspection evidence and the school's own data indicates that standards in Key Stage 2 are now good. Pupils' writing skills lag behind their reading abilities, but are showing signs of improvement.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because teachers monitor their progress closely and provide tailor-made teaching to tackle their particular needs. The special needs coordinator carefully monitors and evaluates this progress and tailors the provision so that pupils make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. The school's strong Christian ethos has impacted positively on their sense of right and wrong and spirituality. Pupils show a reflective and compassionate nature, thinking about people who are worse off than themselves and about those who have lost someone close to them. Pupils behave well. They work cooperatively in teams, share and listen to others' views and have good opportunities to collaborate and help each other. For example, one group of Year 6 pupils testing a prototype rocket gave each other advice and support when things were not going to plan. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above the national average. They are keen to help teachers and to assist in making improvements. Teachers respond positively to their views, for example by providing a ten minute break in the afternoon to refresh their minds before learning some more.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan well structured lessons that are interesting and exciting and build well on pupils' prior learning. Resources, such as interactive whiteboards, individual whiteboards and music, make lessons inspiring and ensure pupils are active participants. Work is generally matched closely to pupils' abilities. In one good mathematics lesson, the mental and oral starter was presented in three ways to meet the particular needs of different groups of pupils and successfully challenged them all. The focus of the lesson is made clear to pupils who understand what they are expected to learn. Pupils have targets and the opportunity to self and peer-assess against the focus of the lesson. This enables teachers to gain immediate feedback about how well pupils are learning. Work is marked diligently. In some classes, however, comments do not show pupils what they need to do to improve their work or to move to the next level. Consequently, some pupils do not know precisely enough what they need to do to improve. Relationships between adults and pupils are strong and this leads to pupils' increased confidence and eagerness to learn. Teaching assistants are used well to provide a good range of targeted intervention strategies.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well devised. There is a clear focus on the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills throughout each key stage. When pupils learn about a particular topic, there are clear connections between different subjects. A particular strength is the way in which pupils contribute to the curriculum. Last year, for example, pupils in Year 5 elected to study famous people as a topic. The resultant lessons ensured that pupils built on their existing skills and knowledge. A mathematics programme is used frequently to remedy children's skills and understanding. It tailors the teaching of specific mathematical skills through interactive information and communication technology (ICT). The impact of this is impressive.

The school is making good progress towards teaching French throughout Key Stage 2 and extending its already good provision in physical education and music. There is a successful choir, who perform for the school and wider community, and an orchestra. The curriculum is

enhanced by a good range of visits and visitors. Year 2, for example, at the time of the inspection, were out on a visit to a local high school extending their literacy and ICT skills. Pupils support a good range of out-of-hours clubs which meet the needs of a wide range of pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral guidance and care is good. This is because adults, and the headteacher in particular, have a good knowledge about each pupil. They show a determination for pupils to succeed and they work hard to break down any barriers to learning. Pupils say that on the rare occasions when they might have a concern over bullying or harassment, adults tackle it effectively. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are well cared for. The school responds well to the views of parents. A good example was the amendments to procedures for the induction of children into the Reception class. Recently introduced behaviour zones are viewed as successful by most pupils, and in one case, have been adapted for use at home. Good systems are in place to ensure pupils' health and safety and the school's safeguarding procedures meet government regulations. There is good support for vulnerable pupils. The school's support for pupils who are gifted and talented is a particular strength since the last inspection. Additional opportunities are provided for them to articulate and research their own ideas. Provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or for whom English is not their first language is good. Intervention programmes are selected carefully to meet the needs of each pupil. These programmes are monitored and then evaluated to identify the impact on pupils' progress. Although academic guidance is good overall, some pupils are not clear enough about what they need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are now good. There has been a marked improvement since the last inspection in the quality of governance, direction and awareness of what the school needs to do to improve. The headteacher provides good leadership and leaders at all levels share her focus and drive to improve pupils' achievement. Challenging targets are used effectively to ensure that pupils are making enough progress and perform to their best. Data from the school's comprehensive monitoring systems are used well by senior leaders to formulate priorities for further improvement. This process is more robust than at the time of the previous inspection and the school now knows itself well. Although subject leaders play a larger part in the process of evaluating the school's provision, their role in monitoring teaching and learning is only at a start. Governance is good. Governors have a well founded understanding of pupil achievement in each subject.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	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	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?	2

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?	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?	Yes

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of St Andrew's C of E (Aided) Primary School, Wirral, CH63 7NL

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school to see how well you were learning. It was particularly good to see some Year 6 children testing a prototype rocket. It was helpful to hear your views about St Andrew's C of E Primary. You told us that it has really improved since the previous inspection in 2006 and we agree with you. It is now a good school. You told us that teaching has improved. This is one of the reasons why you are making better progress than you were a year ago and why the standard of your work has improved. You told us that your behaviour is better too - you certainly made good use of all the new equipment at break times. Some of the other good things that we found when we visited were:

- the outstanding contribution that you make to the school and local community
- the care, guidance and support that adults give you
- the bereavement garden and your concern for others
- the way that your progress is being checked by teachers who then help you to make even better progress.

It is good that you go to the clubs and activities on offer. You also know about healthy foods, but we did see a lot of crisps in lunchboxes, which is not so good if it happens every day!

We have asked the governors, Mrs Woods and the teachers to do the following things to improve your school.

- Help you to achieve higher standards in writing.
- Improve how the teachers comment on your work so that you understand exactly what you need to do to improve.
- Help the teachers who take the lead in different subjects to see how well you are learning and what they can do to improve things.

You can help your teachers by telling them if you find the work too difficult or easy, and by trying your very best in all that you do.

We wish you all the best for the future.