

St Andrew's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105507
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	308875
Inspection date	15 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss M Walker
Headteacher	Miss J Hassall
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2004
School address	Broom Avenue Levenshulme Manchester M19 2UH
Telephone number	0161 432 2731
Fax number	0161 432 0857

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' standards and achievement, especially in English; how well the school adapts its provision to cater for pupils' different needs; and the quality of leadership and management at all levels. Evidence was gathered from: national published assessment data; school documentation; observation of the school at work; discussions with members of staff, pupils and chair of governors; and the questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but were explored sufficiently with the school to enable agreement over the remaining judgements in the report.

Description of the school

This average-sized school serves a community to the south of Manchester city centre that has significant pockets of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible to receive free school meals is a little above average. Around half the pupils are White British and around one quarter are of Pakistani heritage. Other pupils are from a wide variety of minority ethnic backgrounds, with a small number of refugees and asylum seekers. Around one third of pupils speaks English as an additional language and around 10% are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Well above average numbers have a statement of special educational need, mainly because the school houses a 16-place unit for pupils with hearing impairment. The school achieved the Gold Healthy School Award in 2005 and the Manchester Inclusion Standard Gold Award in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school provides a welcoming, secure environment in which pupils make good progress in their academic and personal development. It involves parents very well in their children's learning; for example, by providing 'subject hours' at the end of the day when parents can sample the resources and teaching in different areas. Many partnerships with neighbouring schools and outside agencies greatly enhance the provision. For example, older pupils have produced some high quality comic strips using the expertise and facilities at the local college to draw together their work in school on the Greek myths, in drama, and in information and communication technology. Each year group has links with schools in other countries. Children in the Reception year greatly enjoy sharing with children in nine European countries the exploits of a soft toy, by means of a blog; during the inspection their classroom was full of anticipation because an interesting looking parcel had arrived from Spain. Such enrichment of the curriculum broadens pupils' horizons and helps them grow in understanding of others' cultures and their own place in the community.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and their overall personal development is good. They show respect for others and are helpful towards them in lessons and the playground. Pupils of different ethnicity mix together very well and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in all activities. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. After-school sports activities are popular and school council suggestions have recently led to the provision of a bike shelter and a healthy tuck shop. Pupils' excellent behaviour means that the school operates as a very orderly community in which good quality learning can take place. They enjoy their education and develop good skills to support their future economic well-being. Pupils pay good attention in lessons, follow instructions well and take care with the presentation of their work. Despite the school's determined efforts, attendance levels are below average, in part due to holidays taken in term time.

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Until recently, children's skills on entry to the Nursery have been below those expected for their age. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are broadly average. Year 6 pupils consistently achieve above average results in science and well above average standards in mathematics. In 2007 over half the pupils gained the higher Level 5 in mathematics. However, standards in English at the end of Key Stage 2 have been falling since 2004 and have been below average for the past two years. This is largely due to weaknesses in writing but also to the relatively low proportion gaining the higher level in either reading or writing. Pupils of Pakistani heritage at both key stages reach higher standards than such pupils nationally. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve exceptionally well in response to the high quality support both in and out of the classroom that caters for their individual needs.

Good quality teaching underpins the positive progress that pupils make. Teachers organise activities to suit pupils of different abilities, explain them clearly and make good use of visual cues, including interactive whiteboards, to help pupils' understanding. Classroom displays promote learning in mathematics, geography and art particularly well but those related to English are less attractive or useful. Occasionally, pupils sit for a long time without active involvement in the lesson, or in assembly, but usually timed activities keep them on their toes when they are working individually or in groups. All adults use praise effectively which contributes to the very good quality relationships that are a hallmark of the school. Specialist

teachers and skilful teaching assistants play a valuable role in ensuring that those who find learning more difficult or who are at an early stage of learning English take full part in lessons. Pupils are aware of their targets and they are more involved than at the time of the previous inspection in evaluating their own progress. However, teachers' marking does not provide sufficient, positively worded guidance about the next steps pupils need to take in order to improve their work, and teachers seldom ensure that pupils follow up such comments when they are provided. The pastoral care and support for pupils is very strong, helping them to grow in self-esteem and feel at ease in school. As parents comment, 'All staff are very kind and caring towards everyone.' The required procedures are in place to promote child protection, health and safety.

The headteacher's quiet, authoritative leadership has helped the school maintain its good quality provision over a number of years. The school runs smoothly, all staff work together well as a supportive team and there is a strong sense of commitment and direction. Pupils' progress is tracked and subject leaders now play an active role in monitoring their areas of responsibility. Governors are involved well in school life and kept up to date with changes through presentations by staff at their meetings. The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for development but, despite various attempts, has not yet managed to raise standards in English. Strategic planning outlines priorities and actions but is not tightly focused enough on the desired impact of the actions on pupils' achievement. The leadership is reflective and open to new ideas. The many ways in which the school has moved forward over recent years show that it has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skills on entry to the Nursery have fallen over recent years and are now well below average, particularly in their ability to communicate and their personal and social skills. It is not only those who are at the early stages of learning English who find it hard to string words together and, therefore, to share experiences with others. In the bright, well organised rooms where all adults support them well and engage them in conversation, children make good progress so that the majority join Year 1 working within the expectations for their age but very few exceed these. The recent focus on developing children's understanding of how to link letters and sounds is proving effective. Staff are aware of the need to provide more opportunities for children to make written marks as an integral part of their activities in all areas of learning to help develop their early writing skills. Good leadership ensures a consistent approach to teaching, good use of the attractive outdoor area and careful observation and recording of children's progress. Parents appreciate that they are fully involved as partners in their children's education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English at Key Stage 2, especially in writing.
- Ensure that teachers' marking helps pupils understand how to improve their work and that pupils follow up the guidance given.
- Ensure that school and subject strategic planning identifies measurable success criteria by which to judge the impact of actions on pupils' achievement.

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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	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	1

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	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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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 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?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of St Andrew's C of E Primary School, Levenshulme, M19 2UH

I enjoyed my recent visit to your school and would like to thank you for your warm welcome. Particular thanks go to those of you who spoke to me in lessons, the playground or during my meeting with the school council. You helped me to understand what it is like to be a pupil at St Andrew's.

I agree with you that yours is a good school. This is because it helps you to make good progress during your time there and to reach above average standards in mathematics and science. Staff look after you very well so that you feel that you can share any concerns with them. They are good at encouraging your parents to get involved in your learning too, and at making links with other places like the schools in other countries. The support for pupils with hearing impairment and other learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps them to make excellent progress and to get involved in everything that happens at school. You all get on very well with each other and are interested in finding out more about other people's beliefs and ways of life. Your behaviour is excellent. Your teachers organise lessons well so that they suit your different needs and teachers give you clear explanations. The senior teachers have a good idea of what needs to improve and have done lots of things, sometimes with your help, like establishing the garden and getting the bike shelter, to make sure that St Andrew's keeps on getting better.

I have suggested that they do three things to help make it better still. These are to:

- improve the standards that Key Stage 2 pupils reach in English, especially in writing
- make sure that teachers help you to understand more clearly what you need to do to improve your work, and that you follow through any guidance they give you
- make clear when planning improvements in school how they intend that the actions will help you achieve even more highly.

Your jobs will be to be really enthusiastic about learning and also to attend as regularly as possible so you don't miss out on the fun.