

St Andrew's Church of England Methodist (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112913
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	311049
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Best

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	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Jonathan Haigh
Headteacher	Mr John Clapham
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2004
School address	Pentland Road Dronfield Woodhouse Derbyshire S18 8ZQ
Telephone number	01246 417243
Fax number	01246 417243

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is similar in size to most other primary schools. Most pupils come from the local area and are from predominantly White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average.

When they start in Reception, children's skills and experiences are above those expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is much lower than average, although the proportion of pupils with statements outlining their needs is average.

The school has been awarded the Arts Mark Gold for its creative curriculum and holds the Active Mark for pupils' participation in physical activities.

The present headteacher took up his appointment in September 2007.

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 provides a satisfactory education and this confirms the school's evaluation. This is an improving school which, under the strong and purposeful leadership of the new headteacher, is successfully addressing the legacy of underachievement since the time of the last inspection. Recognising this, parents, in their responses to the inspection questionnaire, express confidence in the school.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average and achievement is now satisfactory. Pupils make sound progress as they move through the school, though this is not consistent from year to year. There are two contributory factors. Firstly, the school does not have an agreed programme for systematically developing pupils' skills. Secondly, teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not well-enough informed because, until recently, they did not have access to the whole range of information available about pupils' standards and progress. These factors have contributed to boys not performing as well as girls because teaching methods have not always suited their learning needs. Pupils, particularly the more able, are not consistently challenged by their work.

The curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers link different subjects in ways that add relevance and enjoyment to pupils' learning. However, planning does not identify sufficiently the skills required to help pupils make the best progress, either in individual subjects or in such areas as independent research, enquiry and problem-solving. The range of extra-curricular activities is good and these are popular with pupils. Personal, social and health education is effectively organised and contributes well to the development of pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

Pupils enjoy school and have positive attitudes to learning, shown through their confident participation in lessons and good attendance. They feel very safe in school and have a good awareness of how to stay healthy. Pupils take an active part in decision-making and make a good contribution to the wider community through fundraising. Their preparation for the next stage of their education and the world of work is satisfactory; it is no better because pupils do not systematically develop the range of skills that match their capabilities.

The school cares well for its pupils and the pastoral support for them is good. As a pupil said, 'You feel warm when you come into school as everyone checks you are alright'. Academic guidance has improved recently and is now satisfactory overall. Although there are instances where assessment, target-setting and marking are effective, inconsistencies across the school are preventing pupils from making better progress.

The headteacher has rapidly identified the most important priorities facing the school. He has won the respect and trust of pupils, parents, staff and governors for the way in which he is involving them in bringing about changes and supporting improvement. Leadership roles and responsibilities are still to be fully agreed and developed so that staff can take more responsibility for identifying needs and piloting through planned improvements. The governing body is actively involved and is developing its role as the school's critical friend. Taking into account the recent improvements, the school has made sound progress since the last inspection. It gives satisfactory value for money and has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

When they start in the Reception class, most children's skills and experiences are above those expected for their ages. By the time they start in Year 1, they reach above average standards in each area of learning. Although girls perform ahead of boys, the recent emphasis on developing boys' personal and social skills has helped to close the gap. Children enjoy school and listen attentively. They are keen to answer questions, they take turns and speak with confidence. They take responsibility for getting changed for outdoor games and for tidying away resources. Trusting relationships between staff and children underlie children's good behaviour and positive response to teaching. Staff make detailed observations of children's participation in learning and use this information to inform the next steps in learning. However, not enough emphasis is placed on children making choices and taking responsibility for their own learning, particularly in outside activities. Learning resources are of good quality but the layout of the accommodation makes it difficult for children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise levels of achievement by ensuring the systematic development of skills within the curriculum, particularly for the more able.
- Make better use of assessment data, target-setting, marking and feedback procedures to increase the rate of pupils' progress.
- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels clearly direct improvement through accurate self-evaluation and forward planning.

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

Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in reading and mathematics, and well above average in writing. Over the past five years, standards have ranged from average to well above average. In mathematics, standards have risen this year because pupils' skills in using and applying mathematics have been a focus for improvement.

At the end of Year 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics, and average in science. Over the past five years, the school's results have not improved as fast as those nationally, particularly in science. In both 2006 and 2007, a significant proportion of pupils had not made the progress expected of them by the end of Year 6. This was particularly evident in science and in boys' writing. The recent emphasis on developing writing skills and pupils' investigative and enquiry skills in science has helped to improve achievement to satisfactory in the current Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs made sound progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good and this is reflected in the respectful, secure, family atmosphere that is evident throughout the school. Pupils' understanding of their own culture is good, but they have only a limited appreciation of the richness of other cultures in modern Britain. Pupils generally behave very well and they treat each other with good manners. They frequently assume responsibilities, for example when organising assemblies and when older pupils act as reading buddies to Reception children. This promotes their self-esteem well and gives them an early understanding of the importance of citizenship. Pupils participate keenly in sporting activities and are proud to represent the school in team games.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching in individual lessons often has good features. These include the constructive relationships between adults and pupils, the quality of the support given by teaching assistants and volunteers and pupils' willingness to answer questions and consider each other's ideas and suggestions. In addition, parents give their children valuable help and support. However, although some teachers ensure pupils' progressive development of skills by matching work well to their individual needs, this is not consistent throughout the school. Where there is good practice, pupils focus on their learning and make good progress. Elsewhere, however, more able pupils have to complete the work set for all pupils before moving onto extension tasks; these pupils are consequently not being stretched and they sometimes become distracted, leading to some low-level disruption.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Regular visitors to school and visits to places of interest broaden pupils' horizons and help them appreciate the wider world. Such activities enrich an otherwise satisfactory curriculum. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties are satisfactorily addressed but the provision for more able pupils remains inconsistent. The recent focus on English development is having a beneficial impact on boys' writing, particularly in Key Stage 2, as more opportunities are being provided to extend their skills across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Effective systems safeguard pupils' welfare and promote their personal development and well-being. Staff know their pupils well and react quickly and sensitively to issues that may arise. Partnerships with external agencies are effective, ensuring appropriate support is given to pupils with learning difficulties. More use is now being made of assessment information to set improvement targets for pupils. Tracking systems are developing and pupils are beginning to understand what they need to do to improve their work in English and mathematics. However, these are not yet established practice throughout the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Staff and governors enthusiastically share the headteacher's vision for the development of the school and are working effectively with him to realise this. Staff are developing a greater understanding of how the school is performing compared with others and how they can bring about improvement. Although the school's current self-evaluation lacks in-depth analysis in some areas, it represents the shared view of staff and governors. With the headteacher's guidance, the development plan emphasises improving pupils' achievement and the quality of provision and highlights the most important priorities facing the school. It provides challenging but achievable targets that are appropriately funded and has clear criteria for judging success. The governing body is supportive of the school. Governors are benefiting from the training provided by the local authority, particularly in developing their understanding of the data available about pupils' standards and progress. This is enabling them to hold the school to account more effectively.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 disabilities make progress	3

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	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

25 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Methodist (Aided) Primary School, Dronfield Woodhouse, S18 8ZQ

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we visited your school earlier this week. You are rightly proud of the warm and friendly atmosphere in the school and we much appreciated the help and kindness you gave us. You enjoy school, attend regularly and behave very well. You also have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. The staff take very good care of you and you told us how much you value this.

In lessons, you listen carefully to your teachers and settle down to work quickly. Sometimes, however, the work you are given to do is too easy and you do not make enough progress. You start chattering about other things and do not do as well as you should. There are two reasons for this. First, your teachers are not always sure what you already know and can do. This is because, until recently, the school has not made sure that teachers have this information. We have asked your teachers to improve the way they use this information to plan their lessons, set you targets, mark your work and tell you how you can improve. Second, there is no overall plan to make sure that what you learn in one class builds on what you already know and will help you learn better in the future. We want your teachers to sort out which skills, such as planning a fair test in science or using library books to find out about the Amazon rainforest, they are going to teach you and then make sure that these fit into a whole-school plan.

Your headteacher, Mr Clapham, came to the school last September. He has worked very hard with the staff and governors to find out what the school needs to do to improve, and particularly how to help you all do as well as you can. He is working with them to plan this all out. We think it is very important that all the staff and governors are fully involved in this planning, checking that these plans are working and in planning for the future. You can help them by sharing your ideas with the School Council and making your best effort in all that you do in school. Keep working hard and enjoying school.

Yours truly

Mike Best Lead inspector