

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided School, Preston, Weymouth

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113835
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	311394
Inspection dates	22–23 April 2008
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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	375
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Timothy West
Headteacher	Vanessa Lucas
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2005
School address	Littlemoor Road Preston Weymouth DT3 6AA
Telephone number	01305 832346
Fax number	01305 834317

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Andrew's is a large school set on the outskirts of Weymouth. Almost all pupils are White British and speak English as their first language. The school has average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and no disabled pupils. Recent staff changes mean that most members of the senior leadership team are new to their roles.

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's Church of England Voluntary Aided School provides a good education. It has some outstanding features. Excellent pastoral care supports pupils' outstanding personal and social development. Pupils love life at St Andrew's and have very few concerns. They feel empowered by their teachers and know that their views are listened to and acted upon. Parents recognise that the school is happy and caring and most appreciate what it does for their children. One representative view is, 'We value all the opportunities the school gives our children. It caters for their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Thank you.' The concerns of a small minority of parents about behaviour are not supported by inspection evidence.

Pupils achieve well at school and their standards are above average by the end of Year 6. Consistently good teaching, coupled with pupils' good behaviour and attitudes, plays a significant part in this positive picture. Children in the Reception Year settle readily into school because classrooms are enjoyable places to learn. As one pupil reported, 'teachers are smiley and happy' and this enhances pupils' learning experiences. Pupils do not receive good enough academic support and guidance because marking of work, while regular, is inconsistent and targets for pupils are variable in quality. The school has plans to address these points.

The opportunities offered by the school's curriculum are outstanding. Work with other local schools and organisations as well as links with a school in Kenya greatly enrich pupils' learning experiences. Regular reviews by all staff ensure that the curriculum is continuously improving to meet pupils' needs and aspirations. Pupils appreciate the many after-school activities, taking part in large numbers.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher is tremendously influential and has high expectations of all who work and learn at the school. The school's self-evaluation is thorough and effective and has ensured good improvement since the previous inspection. Recent staff changes have allowed the headteacher to develop a new management structure which has enabled the school to continue to run smoothly and plan effectively for the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage from a wide range of backgrounds and their skills vary from year to year. This year they were at the expected levels. Parents are closely involved in their children's education in the Foundation Stage. The effective induction process ensures children's happy transition into school life.

Lessons are well planned to meet each learner's interests and needs. This is informed by the close monitoring of progress. Progress is at least satisfactory in all areas of learning and good in some aspects. Particular attention is paid to promoting children's personal development and well-being and preparing them to be lifetime learners. The focus upon language development has contributed to recent improved standards in this area. Use of the new outdoor classroom and outdoor resources promotes children's physical development well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve academic support and guidance for pupils through:
 - o ensuring that marking consistently provides clear guidance on where work could be improved.
 - o developing clear short-term targets to help pupils to understand and achieve the next steps in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils make good progress as they go through the school. As a result, by the end of Year 6, standards are above average.

The well-organised Foundation Stage develops children's good learning routines and positive attitudes. These strengths, a feature of the whole school, provide a firm foundation for pupils' later personal and academic development. Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage are at expected levels and pupils start Year 1 well prepared for the National Curriculum. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average and pupils' achievement is good.

By the end of Year 6, standards are above average and achievement is good. Until recently there was some variation in how well pupils did in different subjects in Years 3 to 6. but an increased emphasis on mathematics and science has ensured that standards in both of these areas have improved over the last year. There are now no significant differences in standards or achievement between the subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The belief that every child matters is fundamental to the work of the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and supported by very effective links with the church and wider community. Pupils know the features of healthy lifestyles and eat healthily. They embrace the numerous opportunities for physical activity. Pupils make an excellent contribution to school life, enthusiastically joining in activities within the local community and further afield. The school council represents pupils' views most effectively and has brought about numerous improvements, such as the reintroduction of cooked lunches.

Attendance is average but, despite the school's good efforts, the incidence of term-time absence is high because seasonal employment results in holidays being taken in term time. Pupils know how to stay safe and bullying is minimal. Behaviour is good, both in class and around school. The small minority who misbehave are gently reminded of the school's expectations and such incidents are well managed. Pupils understand their rights and responsibilities. As a result, they demonstrate positive attitudes towards others and concentrate well in lessons. Older pupils happily assume responsibilities as peer mediators and school councilors. Pupils are very well prepared for the future, particularly through the school's excellent partnerships with schools, colleges and universities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Senior leaders monitor teaching thoroughly. In consequence, teaching is consistently good and pupils learn well. They enjoy lessons. One Year 6 pupil correctly reported, 'Teachers make learning as fun as possible and do lots of interactive things.'

Thorough planning underpins good teaching and learning. Teachers know pupils' needs well, ensuring that the range of activities in lessons offers challenge and support. They have good subject knowledge, which inspires pupils' confidence. Teaching assistants are sensibly deployed and work closely with teachers and pupils, promoting good achievement. Pupils get on very

well with one another and collaborate constructively in discussion and group work. Behaviour is good and pupils report disruption to learning is very unusual. Even the youngest listen carefully and all concentrate well, eager to complete their tasks. Teachers manage lessons with confident assurance, so little time is wasted and the pace of learning is often rapid.

The school uses assessment information effectively to track pupils' progress and provide support for those who might fall behind. However, marking of pupils' work is of variable quality and sometimes does not offer clear advice on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school understands the needs of pupils and the local community very well and has refined the curriculum to meet their requirements. Good use is made of the local environment to extend learning in subjects such as science and geography. The curriculum is further enhanced by visitors to the school, and through excellent links with other schools and colleges, including a partner school in Kenya. Further international links are planned. Curriculum developments are well planned and managed. Regular reviews ensure that the curriculum is constantly modified to promote better learning.

There are numerous examples of innovative projects; for example, a four-year creative arts programme will culminate with performances and displays at the 2012 Olympic sailing events. The curriculum makes a strong contribution to the development of pupils' personal skills, ensuring they are well informed about making safe choices and following healthy lifestyles. The excellent programme of extra-curricular activities is very popular with pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe and secure in an environment where all staff are deeply committed to providing high quality care. Governors and staff ensure safeguarding procedures are robust and effective. A particular strength is the time allocated for senior teaching assistants to offer counselling and support to pupils. The school promotes equal opportunity well. Skilled teaching assistants and successful relationships with other agencies ensure that pupils with learning difficulties are identified early and helped to progress.

Through the local schools' partnership, pupils receive exceptionally thorough academic guidance about future educational pathways, including 14–19 diplomas and university courses. However, the school recognises that target setting is inconsistent and does not always provide pupils with clear enough advice about the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides very good leadership, and is well supported by colleagues and governors. Following recent departures of key members of staff, the leadership team has been restructured and includes the new post of school business manager. This helpfully takes numerous administrative duties out of the hands of teachers. The emphasis upon the continuing professional staff development helps staff to participate in school management more effectively and prepare for change in the future.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and thorough and includes lesson observations, scrutiny of lesson planning and pupils' work. It supports future development by identifying key priorities, and the school's capacity for future improvement is good. The school plans well and this has led to improving standards in mathematics and science, but it does not always analyse the impact of its actions.

One excellent feature of management is the involvement of Key Stage 2 pupils in contributing to improvements and decision making through the school council. Governors have undertaken increased training and are taking a greater role in challenging and supporting the school. Involvement in the Chesil Education Partnership has brought significant benefits to staff and pupils in areas like curriculum development.

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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	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	3
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	1

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?	1
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

24 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Aided School, Preston, Weymouth DT3 6AA

First of all, I would like to thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and agree with you that you have a good school. Your headteacher leads your school very well, and she is ably assisted by the teachers, other staff and the governors.

One of the things inspectors like about your school is the way you enjoy yourselves, in your lessons and at playtimes. Indeed, some of you said that there is nothing you would change about your school. Certainly, the variety of things you have to study is excellent. You are lucky to have such wonderful facilities for playtimes, and you have a lot of exciting activities and clubs to join. Your school encourages you to participate in activities in the community of Weymouth, and inspectors were impressed with your link with Kairuni Primary School in Kenya.

Other things we like about your school are that you get a good start to school life in the Reception classes. You achieve well in reading, writing, maths and science because teaching is good. Your teachers work hard to help you learn well in your lessons, and most of you behave very well and try hard. Your teachers and other staff care very much about you, and are dedicated to helping you succeed. They take special care over anyone who is a bit worried or who finds learning difficult.

To help your school become even better and so you can make faster progress, we have suggested that you have clear targets for English, maths and science. Also, when teachers mark your work, they should see if you have met your target and give you clear suggestions for improvement. You can help by asking for advice on how to improve when you feel you need it.

Once again, thank you very much for the help you gave me and the other inspectors during our visit.

With best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan Lead inspector



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John Carnaghan
Lead inspector