

Ashton-on-Ribble St Andrew's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119602
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313353
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	June Tracey

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	416
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Chris Entwistle
Headteacher	Mrs Susanne Hesketh
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Tulketh Road Ashton-on-Ribble Preston Lancashire PR2 1EQ
Telephone number	01772 726729

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
Inspection number	313353

Fax number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Andrew's C of E Primary School is a larger than average primary school in Preston. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible to claim free school meals is average. The vast majority of pupils are White British; the number of pupils at the early stage of learning English is very low. The school does not have a nursery but most children have experienced some form of pre-school education before joining the Reception year. Children's skills on entry are similar to those normally found for children of their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is 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's is a good school that provides well for all its pupils. Some features of its work are outstanding. It is constantly seeking new ways to stimulate pupils' learning and enthusiasm. The pupils' response is evident from the all-embracing, calm atmosphere in the school that exudes mutual respect for all who work and learn there. The school is well led; effective management systems and dedicated teachers make pupils feel secure and valued. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They work together harmoniously, listening to and gaining from each other in lessons and in other activities. In all, the school has created a caring and nurturing environment. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils say that they enjoy learning and there is good evidence to indicate that their natural curiosity and exuberance are being harnessed well to advance achievement.

Children settle very well into the Reception year where they make good progress. By the end of the year, overall, their skills in regulated areas of learning are slightly above those typical of children of similar age. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards are consistently above average in English, mathematics and science as indicated by assessments and results in external tests. Currently, pupils' progress in English is faster than in mathematics. This is because English, and in particular writing, has been a priority in the school's development plan in recent years. The impact of this is striking. Mathematics is now the focus of attention, the emphasis being on widening opportunities for independent learning and problem-solving. New procedures for analysing progress are effective in identifying and rectifying underachievement. They precipitate a rapid response; pupils value the short spells they spend working in small groups on topics where their understanding is insecure. This, together with good teaching, is underpinning the good achievement.

The curriculum provides well for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. It is enriched by a very wide range of extra-curricular activities in which the rate of participation is high. The school actively seeks to promote healthy living, for example, pupils in a Year 2 class thoroughly enjoyed performing physical jerks before the start of a mathematics lesson. Care and guidance for all pupils is good, especially so for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Well-matched cross-curricular links and close links, formal and informal, with other schools are promoting well an integrated approach to education and to the pupils' understanding of citizenship. Partnerships with the community and the church are strong; they encourage families to be involved as well as the pupils. The school is perceived by local people to be central to the life of the area.

Changes to the organisation, systems and teaching styles in the last few years have been managed carefully in response to the school's self-evaluation. The school knows itself well and is driven by the desire to raise standards further and to be a beacon for providing every pupil with a good start to their future. It is well on its way to achieving both of these. Overall, parents are very satisfied with the school's provision and its impact on their children's work and attitudes. A few parents expressed concern about not being able to communicate easily with the school. The headteacher is aware of this and is taking action to overcome it.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children experience a good start to their education in the Reception class. They are inquisitive and gain confidence in communicating with others and in finding things out for themselves. The vast majority of parents are delighted with the school and their children's progress. They commented on how happy their children are. One parent said: 'My child, who was very shy, has never stopped talking since he came here'. Although there is wide variation, the majority of children enter school with the knowledge and skills typical for children of their age. As a result of the good teaching and assistance from the excellent support staff, the children make good progress, especially in reading. They settle happily in the secure and exciting world they discover in and around the classrooms. Children are exceptionally well cared for, valued and respected. Consequently, the majority, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities behave well and children respond enthusiastically to the carefully planned, stimulating activities provided for them. The outdoor play area has been developed well since the previous inspection and is used very effectively as part of the curriculum for all aspects of learning. Children are encouraged to explore and use their imagination, for example, the children were seen striding over stepping stones to fish in a shallow pond. Children's welfare is promoted well through the sensitive support of all adults. Children are helped to develop an effective understanding of good hygiene routines, and to consider the safety of themselves and others. Good leadership and management, including excellent teamwork, ensure that the children's needs are met effectively.

What the school should do to improve further

- Hasten progress in mathematics.
- Provide more opportunities for investigative work and problem-solving, particularly in mathematics and science, to develop further pupils' independent learning skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well overall. They make good progress in each key stage. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average in Years 2 and 6, indicating steady progression in learning year-on-year. Progress is faster in English however, because improving writing and literacy skills has been a priority in the last two years. The emphasis now is on mathematics. Already this term there is evidence of increased challenge and lively teaching in mathematics lessons. Teacher assessments and results in external tests taken in Years 2 and 6 were consistently above average during the period 2005–2007 but there was a declining trend. The school attributes this to two separate factors, one being the wide ability range and personal circumstances of two year groups in Key Stage 2, the other the absence of consistent assessment procedures within and across the key stages. There is secure documentation to support both these assertions. New whole-school assessment procedures are firmly in place and effective. They are finely tuned so class teachers respond quickly when pupils are not making the expected progress.

The school makes appropriate provision for discrete groups, such as boys, girls and the most able pupils. All make good progress relevant to their starting points. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because the provision is accurately focused on the most immediate of their specific needs. As a result, they are encouraged by short-term gains in learning that spur them on to the next step. Similarly, the support for pupils at the

early stage of learning English enables them to make swift gains in language and to integrate quickly into the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn, demonstrated by their positive attitudes and excellent behaviour. Comments in the parents' questionnaires support the inspectors' findings. Pupils' progress in understanding spiritual, moral and social issues is very good; cultural development is good, although not as strong. Links with the church and thought-provoking assemblies promote the school's positive, caring ethos very effectively.

Attendance is above average. Pupils' regular attendance promotes continuity in learning which, in turn, underpins the good achievement. Pupils say they feel safe, and that adults are always on hand to help if they have any worries. Pupils enjoy exercise through the good allocation of time for physical education as well as the many extra-curricular sports clubs.

Pupils' good gains in basic literacy, numerical and technical skills prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils work well collaboratively, which raises their self-esteem and opens up opportunities for the less confident to contribute ideas and opinions. Pupils make a significant contribution to school life through the school council, for example, they contributed to decisions relating to the provision of healthy snacks and to how the Key Stage 2 playground could be improved. Pupils take seriously their roles of responsibility in helping with the day-to-day running of the school. This promotes well the development of simple leadership skills. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community through their support for a variety of charities and active involvement in local events.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The most exciting lessons seen were conducted at a brisk pace and provided good opportunities for collaboration, cooperation and independent work. Pupils were fully engaged because the tasks were varied and challenging. There was a genuine buzz in these lessons and pupils exuded enthusiasm for learning, such as in a history lesson in Year 5 where pupils used technology and reference books to research the Tudors. In a few lessons, tasks lacked sufficient challenge and opportunities for independent learning were missed.

Teachers plan their lessons well using their good subject knowledge but there are not enough opportunities for investigative work and problem-solving in mathematics and science. The school has introduced good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and for tracking their progress; these are being used increasingly well to identify and support pupils who are not doing as well as they could. The needs of the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are assessed carefully so targets for learning are very precise. Teaching assistants use these very well to move the learning on step-by-step at a pace that gives pupils the chance to experience success and to feel good about their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall. It has some outstanding features, such as the wide range of extra-curricular activities. Provision for pupils who are underachieving is readily available and used well. Since the previous inspection, good progress has been made in strengthening aspects of the curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) and English have improved significantly, both having a positive impact on overall standards. Opportunities for investigative work and problem-solving are less well developed. The curriculum is currently being reviewed with a view to adopting a more creative approach and meaningful links between subjects.

Parents and volunteers are encouraged to become involved in the school's provision. One parent, for example, gave a talk on Sikhism. Local secondary schools provide much valued support for ICT, French, physical education and science. An excellent range of music, art and sporting activities enriches the curriculum; for instance, the school choir joins in many community activities, including singing in a choir of over 4000 in the Manchester Young Voices Concert. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these activities, including those provided for the gifted and talented. Educational visits and residential experiences provide valuable additions to pupils' cultural experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good, with some excellent features. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils, including those for child protection, are well established and fully meet requirements. The staff is vigilant and supervision is good at all times.

This is a school where every child is known and supported. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is excellent. Staff go to great lengths to secure specialist help and resources. One parent said: 'Staff have gone more than the extra mile for my child'. Pastoral care has a high profile in school. The learning mentor and nurture team know families very well and are readily accessible. They adopt a supportive approach and intervene quickly to prevent small problems escalating into bigger ones. Good arrangements are in place to support the transition to secondary schools; pupils say they are confident about the move. Pupils with emotional difficulties receive sensitive but firm support and are thus able to cope with the conventions of school life. Teaching assistants are effective because they know the pupils well and provide an appropriate level of guidance.

The marking of work is variable in its impact. In English, where it is good, marking informs pupils about what they have done well and sets out the next steps so they know exactly what to do to improve. Guidance to take pupils' learning forward in mathematics is in the development stage and is less effective.

The school works well to involve parents, families and the community in the pupils' education, thereby enriching their learning. The contribution of the police to road safety education is a typical example of how citizenship issues are becoming integral to the broader curriculum.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and leadership team are spearheading initiatives that involve all staff in working to agreed priorities resulting from a thorough analysis and evaluation of pupils' progress and personal development. Inspectors agree with the school's judgements except in two areas, curriculum and care and guidance. These were judged good rather than outstanding because it is too early to see the full impact of the progressive improvement in provision on pupils' personal development. Typical examples of the cohesiveness of the staff's response are the exciting English lessons, improvement in writing skills and the current drive to improve mathematics further. Teachers and teaching assistants are deployed effectively so that the best use is made of their time. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in pupils' effective use of ICT skills and in middle managers' forceful response in their areas of responsibility. The latter extends to their work in partnership with other schools, which is raising pupils' aspirations and their families' awareness of opportunities available to them within the local community. Governors are supportive, know the school well and are effective in holding it to account for its actions.

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

16 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ashton-on-Ribble St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, PR2 1EQ

Thank you for your welcome and for telling us so much about your school and how you enjoy being there. We think that St Andrew's is a good school. Judging by your comments you feel safe and value the many opportunities provided, including those linked to activities in the community. The massive singing event at the Manchester Arena is just one of these.

We were impressed by your very good behaviour and your understanding of how this affects your learning and relationships with each other. Your good attitudes contribute to the happy atmosphere in school. In lessons, you listen well, volunteer answers and are not afraid to have your mistakes used to move learning on for all pupils. This is good. The school council told us a lot about what happens in school and how you influence decisions that make things better for you and people outside school. We were pleased too to see that you understand the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle; the physical activities that we saw at the start of a mathematics lesson in Year 2 were a good example of how you put your learning into practice.

A very important part of your learning is your progress in English and mathematics. The school's assessment of your work on a daily basis is enabling you to get extra help for short periods, in small groups, when you have particular difficulties. You told us how valuable this is and how it helps you with other work. By looking at your books and visiting lessons we can see that the standard of your work in both subjects is good. It is slightly better in English than mathematics because you have responded well to the emphasis your school has placed for some time on improving your writing skills. The focus now is on mathematics. To make your work still better we have asked your teachers to provide more opportunities for you to investigate and to solve problems for yourselves.

Thank you once again for your welcome and courtesy during the inspection. You have much going for you in your school. Make the most of what is offered.

With best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely

June Tracey

Lead inspector