

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123785
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314717
Inspection date	2 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Anthony Shield

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Bowkett
Headteacher	Stephen James
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 0001
School address	Dunstan Road Burnham-on-Sea TA8 1ER
Telephone number	01278 783558
Fax number	01278 793506

Age group	7-11
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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: achievement and standards, pupils' personal development and well-being, the quality of teaching, the curriculum, care, guidance and support, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation (SEF), national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies, minutes and other school documentation. Observation of the school at work, interviews with members of the teaching staff and pupils, and parental questionnaires also provided evidence. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St Andrew's Junior School is of an average size. Most pupils are of White British origin and live in Burnham-on-Sea. On entry, most pupils' attainment is average, and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school with many very special features. Fundamental to the school's success is its belief in partnership to secure the best for all its pupils. Staff and pupils are learning partners and teamwork and a sense of community are very strong. Parents are encouraged to work together with the school and exceptional links with the nearby infants school ensure a smooth transition for pupils. The school's excellent links with the church and the local and wider community give pupils an understanding of their role in society as a whole. Within this network of partnerships, both teachers and pupils thrive.

The school's culture of high expectations, professional trust and working together are woven into the fabric of the school. The headteacher leads with a calm authority and determination to get the very best from his staff and children. He is very well supported by his deputy and assistant headteachers, and all the staff work well as a cohesive team. Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding. Subject leaders play a key role in monitoring standards in their areas of responsibility and take the initiative in leading developments. As a result, the school's self-review processes are deep-rooted and form the basis for realistic self-evaluation and sensible school improvement planning. The school looks forward with confidence. 'As teachers, we are developing together' is how one teacher described the school's approach to professional development, and their commitment to making the school even better. Sharing good practice and an open debate about what works well are hallmarks of the school's approach. Committed and knowledgeable governors play a significant role in keeping the school on track.

Pupils reach significantly above average standards by the time they leave in Year 6. Given their average starting points in Year 3, pupils make exceptional progress and overall achievement is outstanding. Standards and achievement have been consistently at this level in English, mathematics and science in recent years. Able pupils do very well, although the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 in mathematics, while above average, has not recently reached the high levels that are achieved in English and science. The school's recent priority to improve the performance of pupils in writing has been very effective and impressive gains have been made in recent years. Challenging targets are met or exceeded and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make exceptionally good progress. Such good progress is the result of excellent teaching. Lessons hum with purposeful activity because teaching is confident, classrooms are calm and orderly, and lessons are introduced with panache. Teaching focuses sharply on how well pupils learn and encourages pupils to develop curiosity and independence. Effective and probing questions such as 'How do you know that?' deepen understanding. Resources, including interactive whiteboards, are used well to stimulate interest and make the learning exciting. As one pupil remarked, 'I have a lot of fun in lessons.' Marking is detailed and helpful. Well targeted support is given by teaching assistants to ensure all pupils feel included and confident to succeed.

The school's values and high aspirations are reflected in the pupils' outstanding personal development. The school pays careful attention to each and every pupil, respecting their individuality and showing by example how to care for others. Indeed, exceptional pastoral care and guidance are the foundation of all that the school does. Pupils' health, safety and welfare, including child protection and risk assessments, are a high priority. The care and support of vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are especially good. Pupils are friendly and kind. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good, and pupils enjoy school and take enthusiastic pride in joining in all that it has to offer. They

show a concern for each other and willingly take responsibility as 'playground friends' for looking after others. Older pupils enjoy helping younger pupils in guided reading sessions. Pupils take an active part in lessons, and respond positively to motivational strategies such as merit cards and 'Handwriting Leagues' where promotion up the league is dependent on reaching specific standards of handwriting. They are keen to please and most take considerable care with their work. Most of all, pupils enjoy school, which is reflected in their above average attendance.

The school's caring values underpin its work in relation to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A strong spiritual dimension is promoted through the school's close association with the church and assemblies are dignified and respectful occasions. Opportunities to share ideas and feelings in the personal, social and health programme, and to use debating and negotiating skills in the school council, help prepare pupils successfully for the future. Pupils have a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They feel safe in school and know that instances of bullying are taken seriously and, as one pupil described, 'definitely sorted out' by teachers.

The quality of academic guidance is good and increasingly effective as teachers get to grips with what assessment data tells them about pupils' progress. They have made a good start with this, though more needs to be done to make this a confident feature of everyday practice. Regular meetings are timetabled with senior staff and class teachers to review each pupil's progress. These are used well to adapt and modify the curriculum to suit individual pupils. Intervention strategies are considered for both underachieving pupils and those making better than expected progress. The programme of withdrawal groups for the more able to provide greater depth and challenge is a particularly enlightened idea. Because of this flexibility, the excellent curriculum is very well adapted to individual learning needs. Rooted in good provision for basic skills, the school nevertheless offers a rich tapestry of subjects, enrichment and intervention programmes, extra-curricular clubs and activities, visits and visitors.

The school has the committed support of its parents and the community it serves. Typical amongst the many very supportive comments made by parents was this one: 'I can do nothing more than praise the school fully. It is fantastic in every aspect...my children have not only had a wonderful education but also a happy experience.' Given the school's recent track record, it has an excellent capacity to make further improvements and maintain its high standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build the capacity of all subject leaders and class teachers to use and interpret assessment data to get the very best out of all pupils.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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?	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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	1
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?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

3 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's C of E Junior School, Burnham-on-Sea. TA8 1ER

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed talking to you and particularly liked the friendly welcome you gave me. Your outstanding school is a very special place and you are rightly proud to attend it.

- These are the most important things to say about your school:
- The school works well with other partners to ensure you get the very best education.
- All the staff work well as a team and make you feel part of the team as well.
- Teachers have high expectations and trust you to get on with your work sensibly and without fuss. This, you manage to do really well!
- You enjoy going to school, get on well with the teachers and take part in everything with energy and enthusiasm.
- You are well behaved, friendly and play well together.
- Your teachers make lessons interesting and fun, and provide lots of interesting things for you to learn.
- There is a fantastic range of clubs you can join.
- The school takes very good care of you and the support given to those of you who need most help is excellent.
- Your headteacher and all the staff have worked very successfully to keep your school one of the best!
- Most of you make outstanding progress, but I have asked the school to make sure teachers use information about how well you are progressing to ensure you make even better progress!

Thank you once again for your help during the inspection.

With best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Mr Tony Shield Lead inspector

3 October 2007

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