

St Andrew's CofE (C) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124298
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	314880
Inspection date	16 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Carol Parkinson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	146
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marjorie Boothby Mbe
Headteacher	Geoff P Daynes
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2004
School address	Ferrers Road Weston Stafford ST18 0JN
Telephone number	01889 256555
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves the village of Weston and the wider rural area. A minority of pupils are from armed services families or Traveller families of Irish heritage.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a happy, friendly village school and it provides a good education through its lively curriculum and wide range of clubs and visits. Its particular strength lies in its pastoral care, so that pupils feel secure and are keen to learn. The pupils love their school.

When children join the Reception class, standards are broadly average, with strengths in speaking, listening and in mathematics. Children make good progress, especially in writing, and by the time they enter Year 1, their standards in basic skills are better than those usually seen in children of their age. Years 1 and 2 build on this early success so that standards are above average by the end of Year 2. In the recent past there has been a dip in standards in test results in English and science at the end of Year 6. The school identified the weaknesses which contributed to this and, with the help of the local authority, put systems in place to address them. For example, the role of subject leaders has been developed so as to improve consistency in the quality of teaching from class to class, including subject knowledge, planning, assessment and resources. As a result, standards and progress in these subjects have improved steadily since September 2007 and are now good, with more pupils attaining higher levels. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because they receive careful guidance and support. While progress is good for most groups, higher-attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented could do even better given more opportunities for independent research.

The quality of teaching has improved as a result of the school's strategies and monitoring by the headteacher with support from the local authority. Teaching is good overall because planning is closely linked to previous learning, so tasks set for pupils are well matched to their needs and are usually at a suitable level of difficulty. Higher-attaining pupils, however, do not always have sufficiently detailed tasks to develop their skills and knowledge in enough depth. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they are keen to learn because they enjoy their lessons and respect their teachers.

The school provides good care, guidance and support. It is a popular and trusted base for Traveller families and the school includes all groups of pupils effectively. Its pastoral care is outstandingly good so pupils feel safe and have excellent relationships with each other and with adults. Academic guidance is good and the school has made significant improvement in the way it uses the national curriculum to plan and assess pupils' work. The quality of marking has also improved, especially in English, helping pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work and defining suitable targets for pupils to reach. The school provides a good curriculum, with an exciting range of clubs and visits and residential educational visits in Staffordshire in Year 4 and Year 5, and to the Isle of Man in Year 6, which extend pupils' knowledge and experience beyond the school day. Provision for information and communication technology and for science has improved since the last inspection. Links with outside agencies are good and there is effective support for pupils who need additional help.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher, with the support of the senior management team, governors and local authority, has identified suitable areas for improvement. The impact of the strategies for literacy and numeracy are effective and the rate of pupils' progress has increased rapidly in consequence. Plans for the next stage in the school's development are not as clearly defined as the aims. Although the school has identified suitable issues for future development, there is not enough detail about how these will be achieved. Governors provide good support and hold the school to account for its standards. The school

has shown that it has good capacity for improvement through the impact of its previous achievements, and it is well placed to develop its work and raise standards further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children come into the Reception class from several different settings and with widely different backgrounds. Their skills on entry vary from broadly average to above average. They make good progress in their early writing and numeracy skills because of effective assessment and teaching. Teaching is well adapted to meet children's varying needs so they learn quickly. By the time children enter Year 1, standards are above average, particularly in basic skills.

There are many opportunities for children to play and learn independently in the spacious accommodation. Sometimes play activities lack detail in planning and purpose for children to learn as much as they could, and adult intervention is not focused sharply enough. Adults are very caring, expect high standards of work and behaviour, and set a good example. Children are happy, safe, inquisitive and eager to learn in this friendly atmosphere.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of tasks for higher-attaining pupils in order to develop their skills and knowledge in more depth.
- Sharpen the focus of the school's improvement plan to show in more detail how future improvements will be made.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards by the end of Year 2 and again at the end of Year 6. Children in the Reception class make good progress in all areas of learning and particularly in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, which prepares them well for Year 1. Results of national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2007 were above average in all subjects and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress and the number of pupils attaining higher levels is above that normally seen. Standards and achievement in reading, writing and mathematics are good.

Year 6 national tests in 2006 and 2007 indicated that while results in mathematics were slightly above average, too few pupils attained higher levels, particularly in English and science, and that progress was not fast enough from Years 3 to 6. The school put strategies in place to improve pupils' achievement and these have proved to be successful. There has been a rapid improvement in achievement, with more pupils attaining higher levels in English and in science and higher standards overall. Progress is, however, slower in the split Year 4/5 class, where higher-attaining pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school has recognised this and intends to rearrange its class structure to provide more equally balanced Key Stage 2 classes and incorporate single group teaching in Science from September 2008. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress throughout the school because of carefully planned work and a high level of practical support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Moral, social and cultural development is especially strong, and this is demonstrated by pupils' very good manners, their care for each other and their interest in and awareness of the arts. Spiritual development is good. Pupils are respectful of others, especially those whose culture is different from their own, and they care deeply about the environment.

Pupils are thoroughly committed to a healthy lifestyle and know that healthy eating and exercise are desirable, but their knowledge of why this is so is weaker. Pupils say they feel safe at school, that there is little bullying and that it is quickly resolved. They feel well looked after and have a very good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe, for example, on the Internet. All groups of pupils thoroughly enjoy school life. One pupil, when asked his opinion, said after hard thought, 'I love this school.'

Attendance figures for most groups of pupils are above average. However, the school's overall statistics are below average, because of the mobile lifestyle of some of the Traveller families for whom the school provides a base for much of the year. Behaviour is outstanding and pupils enjoy taking responsibility as prefects and house captains. Pupils are well involved in local community activities but the role of the school council is underdeveloped so that pupils do not have as strong a voice in school improvement as they could. Pupils' positive attitudes and above average standards prepare them well for secondary school and future employment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning are good. The strongest features in teaching are the pace and presentation of lessons and the very good relationships teachers have with their pupils. The school's use of personalised learning has been a key feature in raising standards and teachers use this well. Teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is a particular strength so that pupils' spelling and handwriting are usually good and their ability to manipulate numbers is strong. Assessment is now used very well to help average and below-average groups of pupils make good progress. However, the expectations of the rate of learning of higher-attaining pupils are still not high enough, and there are too few opportunities for independent research and discovery, although pupils carry out set tasks well independently and in groups. The quality of marking has improved, but is still variable, and is better in English than mathematics. Teaching assistants work effectively with pupils with learning difficulties but occasionally they are not sufficiently involved during whole-class presentations. There is a good atmosphere in lessons and pupils are keen to learn because of the effective quality of teaching they receive.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum supports pupils' development well through its personal, social and health education programme and by providing many opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide variety of local activities. Pupils in Year 6 make a residential visit to the Isle of Man, where they explore a different environment and demographic setting. The school has a good range of

well-attended clubs such as French, guitar and sports that enhance pupils' education. French, the arts and sports are all strengths of the school. The school has improved provision for science by improving teachers' subject knowledge and increasing resources and opportunities for pupils' practical work. Provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly since the previous inspection and the school uses it well to support pupils' learning, especially through video link lessons to access expert tuition in music and French. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The curriculum has scope to improve provision to meet the needs of higher-attaining and gifted and talented pupils better by developing links between subjects, by increasing opportunities for research and extending pupils' thinking skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's pastoral care for its pupils is outstanding. Adults know the pupils very well and as a result, pupils are confident about asking for help if they have a problem. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good and sensitive support, especially from teaching assistants, and their individual programmes ensure they make good progress. Safeguarding is sound and child protection procedures are robust. Academic guidance is good. The school has developed its tracking and assessment systems so that teachers have better information to help them plan work for pupils learning at different rates, and this has helped teachers and pupils to have a better grasp of what needs to be done to reach challenging targets. More could still be expected of some higher-attaining pupils. Marking is good in English but it is weaker in mathematics. The school works well with outside agencies.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, governors and the senior management team have identified areas for improvement and have addressed them effectively during the last two years to arrest the decline in standards. The governors provide good support for the headteacher in their day-to-day knowledge of the school and the community and have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Recently, governors have been more involved in holding the school to account for pupils' progress and as result have a better knowledge of target-setting procedures and the curriculum. The impact of strategies to raise standards and to improve pupils' progress is good, and systems are implemented consistently and effectively. The introduction of 'assessment for learning' has improved teaching and raised standards. Subject leaders work successfully together and with outside agencies to set challenging targets, improve subject knowledge and consistency of provision. The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate and provides a clear explanation of how improvement has been made. The school's plans to build on recent progress are less clear. While the school has identified what it needs to improve, and in general terms what to do, there is insufficient detail in the school improvement plan about how progress will be made. The school is careful to give different groups of pupils a fair chance to succeed, and this is a strongly marked feature of the school. Resources are used well to provide small- group work to improve the rate of pupils' learning.

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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?	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	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

17 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's C of E (C) Primary School, Weston, Staffordshire, ST18 0JN

Thank you very much for making us so welcome and helping us during the inspection of your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and finding out some of the interesting things you have learned and what you thought about the school. In this letter, we are going to explain what we have found out.

- Your behaviour is very good and you are thoughtful and caring to other children and grown-ups.
- You love your school! You enjoy learning in class as well as all the clubs, visits and playtime.
- You think the work is a good mixture of hard and easy, and usually makes you think just hard enough.
- You know what a healthy lifestyle is but sometimes you find it difficult to explain why it is healthy.
- Some of you think that the school council could do more to help the school.
- You feel safe and like the grown-ups at the school.
- You work hard and make good progress. We think some of you could do even better.

We want to help your school so we have asked your headteacher and staff to;

- Help those of you who learn more quickly by giving you work that makes you think harder.
- Make more detailed plans to help everyone to keep improving the school.

We hope you go on enjoying school and working hard and we wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Parkinson Lead inspector