

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Ramsbottom

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105326
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	324202
Inspection date	26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Marie Cordey

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	240
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 Ian Rogerson
Headteacher	Mr D Marsh
Date of previous school inspection	26 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Nuttall Lane Ramsbottom Bury Lancashire BL0 9JD

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	26 February 2009
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Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the pupils' achievement and standards; the quality of teaching and learning; the pupils' personal development and well-being and how well the school's leadership promotes care and high standards. Evidence was gathered from national published assessment data; the school's self-evaluation; assessment records, policies and minutes of meetings; observation of lessons; pupils' work; discussion with pupils, staff, the chair of governors and a parent governor; and the questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, in its self-evaluation form, were not justified. These have been included, where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school drawing pupils from a predominantly residential area. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision includes two Reception classes. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award, the International Schools award and the Activemark award gold, for its sports provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to this good school and cannot think of a single thing that they would want to change at 'Star school St Andrew's'. The overwhelming majority of parents agree: 'St Andrew's is an excellent school and I can't imagine sending our children anywhere else,' and, 'the staff appear to enjoy their days as much as the children', are typical comments. There is no doubt that staff do enjoy their work and are united in their commitment to the provision of good care which is the cornerstone for pupils' good personal development and well-being, including their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils achieve very well from their broadly average starting points in Reception Year to attain well above average standards in all assessed subjects by the end of Year 2. The school's strong focus on raising standards in problem solving has led to improved standards in mathematics by the end of Year 2 as well as for the more able pupils across the school. Overall, good progress is maintained in Years 3 to 6 and standards are well above average in most subjects with an increasing proportion of pupils attaining very highly for their age. Nevertheless, skills in writing are above, rather than well above average at Key Stage 2 because writing creatively at length is underdeveloped. The school has identified writing, overall as an area for improvement in Key Stage 2 and for the more able pupils, in particular. In addition, a small number of parents want their children to be challenged more effectively. Inspectors agree that higher attainers at Key Stage 2 are not yet fully challenged in their writing. Interventions to raise standards in writing for the more able pupils are planned using the strategies that proved successful in mathematics. The school has yet to implement the change. Pupils' progress towards their challenging targets is regularly tracked and evaluated by senior leaders, classroom teachers and teaching assistants. The systems are needlessly complicated and cumbersome and, therefore, lesson planning and assessment are not precise enough. Consequently, when information is shared with pupils they are not given clear enough instructions about what precisely they need to do in order to improve their work.

Pupils know how to keep fit and are very skilled in the wide range of sports offered by the school. They are also very knowledgeable and persuasive about the importance of eating healthily. Pupils are polite and well behaved. They feel safe in the school's caring and nurturing environment and their attendance is above average. They like school so much because, 'it's the lovely atmosphere here'. Pupils make a commitment to their community through their work in the parish, in concerts at local nursing homes and by generous fundraising locally and internationally. They form close links with schools in different countries and are knowledgeable about the global community. They are satisfactorily prepared for life in a diverse society which reflects the school's sound commitment to promote community cohesion. The school has work in hand to take this further by increasing its involvement with the diverse communities in local areas.

The good quality teaching and learning are based on a varied curriculum that is well matched to pupils' needs. 'The school has an excellent programme of extra-curricular activities', comments a parent and this reflects the outstanding range of opportunities available for pupils to develop their interests and skills. Parents welcome the out-of-school care provided on the premises. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to plan and support lessons. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and challenged. High expectations for most pupils are based on detailed knowledge of pupils' capabilities as well as their interests and needs. Lessons are interesting and, generally, pupils are joyful participants. During a

practical science activity in a Year 3 lesson, pupils' learning was accelerated because they were actively involved and eager to discuss and demonstrate their findings. They learned how crucial it is to measure accurately and work out theories. Occasionally, when the lesson is not matched closely enough to all the pupils' needs, or when their teacher speaks for too long, pupils are not sure what to do and become passive and less focused on their learning. Additional resources have led to improvements in pupils' attainment in information and communication technology which along with pupils' standards in other basic skills prepare them well for the future.

The headteacher is determined to provide the best outcomes for pupils. All staff respond well to this leadership and there is a clear sense of a united school community. As a parent governor puts it: 'All the staff have very good relationships and this is reflected in how well pupils relate to each other.' Links with outside services, such as the local authority and school improvement partners, make a good contribution to pupils' personal development and well-being. The governing body is very supportive and involved in school life and asks searching questions about the school's performance. External accreditations help the school monitor how well it is doing. Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet requirements. Improvement since the previous inspection and the effectiveness of its self-evaluation support the school's good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's starting points are broadly in-line with expected levels for their age and they progress well to attain levels above those expected. This is because provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children and their parents are made to feel welcome and this helps children to settle into school life quickly. The Teddy Bears' Picnic is part of this and has become a binding community event. A wide range of activities encourages children to explore and enjoy their learning. Children could not wait to play and learn from all the well prepared games, role-play areas, computers and painting activities made available for them. These are matched to the needs of the individual and, as a result, children achieve well. Good quality teaching and learning stem from good leadership and management closely focused on children's progress and personal development. Children become increasingly confident and self-reliant because of the good care for their welfare. Each child is listened to very carefully because their views are taken seriously. Committed teaching and support staff build up trust and children revel in the attention they receive. Leaders are beginning to implement planning for further opportunities for children to learn outdoors in order to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in writing in Years 3 to 6, particularly for the more able pupils.
- Simplify assessment systems to help staff to develop pupils' understanding of exactly how to improve their work.

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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 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3
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**

Inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Ramsbottom, Bury, BL0 9JD

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave the inspectors. Many of you made a point of speaking to us and, in particular, I would like to thank the pupils who came to meet with an inspector to share their views about school life. You played a big part in making the inspection so enjoyable and I would like to share with you what I found out about your school.

Yours is a good school. You learn well because you enjoy it and your work is well above average in nearly all subjects. Your behaviour is good and you are very thoughtful young people. All the staff in the school respect and value each and every one of you. You and your parents appreciate the excellent range of activities on offer after school.

You are encouraged to eat healthily and keep fit and you take health very seriously. Your excellent attitudes to diet and your enthusiasm and skill in sports make you very healthy indeed. Well done! You love coming to school and enjoy every aspect of what the school has to offer. You are keen to make a contribution in your local area, for instance, when the choir sang at a nearby nursing home. You also raise lots of money for charity, through school and the parish.

Children in the Reception class settle down quickly and make good progress when they join the school. They are well cared for and made to feel welcome by you.

I have asked the staff to explain more clearly what you need to do to make your work better. I have also asked your school to improve your work in writing for pupils in Years 3 to 6, especially for those of you who are good at writing and could be even better. I know you will enjoy the challenge and improve your work even more.