

# St Andrew's CofE VA Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113417
<b>Local Authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	325814
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alex Baxter

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	190
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Valerie Armitage
<b>Headteacher</b>	Shaun Nicholls
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Citadel Road Plymouth PL1 3AY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01752 201660

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 June 2009
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**Fax number**

01752 205067

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the consistency of provision in meeting pupils' differing needs, including an increasing number from minority ethnic backgrounds, often with English as an additional language
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers in sustaining pupils' consistent progress through the school
- the degree to which teachers help pupils to become independent learners.

Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, assemblies and pupils at lunch and play. Teachers' assessment records and pupils' work were scrutinised. Discussions were held with pupils, staff, governors and parents. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire were analysed. 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, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This school is below average in size. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a designated Reception class. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, but is higher than this in some year groups. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with an increasing number from minority ethnic backgrounds, often with English as an additional language, arriving in recent years. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is above that normally expected. The school holds a substantial number of awards and these include: Healthy Schools, Basic Skills, School Achievement, Full International, Foundation Stage and Activemark Gold awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

St Andrew's is an outstanding school. It is a very caring, inclusive school that serves the pupils, their families and their community extremely well. Throughout their time in the school, pupils derive significant benefit from the excellent care, guidance and support provided by the staff. Pupils also greatly enjoy and gain advantage from a very stimulating range of curricular learning activities offered both in and out of school. As they move through the school, the pupils' learning is also enriched by exemplary teaching, which is typified by warm relationships, high expectations of work and behaviour, and by learning through practical activity. These approaches have an additional and cumulative influence in enabling pupils to become truly independent learners. This was evident, for example, as Year 2 pupils, anxious to show the inspector their ideas for advertising their class museum on ancient Egypt, moved swiftly, confidently and capably to access their work stored on computers. These above-average information and communication technology (ICT) skills are now developed within a relatively new and superbly equipped ICT suite. Such improvements show clearly how well the school has moved forward since its previous inspection in 2005, when it was also found to be outstanding. St Andrew's demonstrates an outstanding capacity to bring about improvement.

Excellent leadership and management underpin the school's ability to sustain excellent provision and to promote the pupils' outstanding academic and personal achievement. Key strengths include the headteacher's personal example in providing secure stewardship at a time of staff change and, through high-quality self-evaluation, holding true to the school's caring ethos. Senior staff colleagues, operating as team, contribute very effectively to the shared vision of continuing improvement. Governors also play an important role in ensuring longer-term consistency and in anchoring the school's commitment to an empathetic and inclusive Christian ethos. Leaders and managers fulfil their monitoring roles diligently and take the required steps to bring about improvement. Often, as is the case in the Early Years Foundation Stage in developing children's writing, staff act innovatively to enrich learning.

The school's exemplary curriculum includes a wide range of after-school clubs, numerous educational visits and frequent participation in community events. These include, for example, visits to the National Marine Aquarium and Burrator Reservoir and lively contributions to 'Wake and Shake' morning exercises and by the choir in 'The Lord Mayor's Christmas Concert'. The pupils' very good participation in clubs, especially in sporting activities such as regular swimming sessions, contributes to their excellent adoption of healthy and safe lifestyles. Their good attendance also reflects their enjoyment of school. The excellent care, guidance and support provided by the staff begin the moment children enter school and embrace their families. Staff ensure that up-to-date policies and procedures are implemented consistently to fully safeguard the pupils' welfare. Staff are also rigorous in involving outside agencies, for example, speech therapists and specialist support for pupils with English as an additional language, in the swift, but accurate identification of pupils' needs. High-quality support continues for all groups, including for the increasing numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with English as an additional language, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Since the last inspection, the school has also strengthened support for the more able pupils and overall standards have been increased. Staff assess and track pupils' progress very accurately. They use these records very effectively and, in discussion with parents and pupils, set challenging targets to accelerate progress and raise standards further. The continuing improvement in writing, for example, reflects earlier identification and intervention to support pupils who find

learning difficult. The pupils' improving skills also stem from their good contributions in target setting and in evaluating their own and each other's writing. Staff give high quality oral guidance and their questioning and positive responses to pupils' ideas are very instrumental in promoting new learning. However, there is inconsistency, at times, in teachers' marking of pupils' work, in the amount of information given to pupils on how to improve and this reflects missed opportunities to accelerate learning even more.

All pupils, across the range of abilities and backgrounds, achieve outstandingly well by the time they leave the school. Collectively, skills are well below those levels expected on entry to the school, especially the children's personal, social and emotional development and their language and communication skills. In response to excellent teaching, pupils make very good gains in their learning as they move through the school. Learning quickens as the pupils take on more ownership and responsibility for their work, for example, problem solving in mathematics, investigating evaporation in science or researching topics such as 'Brazil', which link subjects together. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in mathematics, science and ICT and are broadly average in English. Many pupils also develop very good skills in the expressive arts and sports and represent the school and various clubs, at times at a national level.

One pupil's comment that, 'School is the best place to be' typically illustrates the pupils' appreciation of the sincerity and quality of the care they receive. Pupils reflect carefully about the advice they receive from adults and participate with great enthusiasm in all aspects of school life. They show genuine concern for others and enjoy excellent relationships. They undertake a variety of responsibilities willingly, for example, looking after 'Huff and Puff' playground equipment at playtimes, and contribute fully to the day-to-day life of the school. These qualities, alongside their excellent manners and the warm welcome given to newly arriving pupils and visitors, reflect their exemplary spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils' personal skills, in combination with their excellent academic achievement, prepare them extremely well for the future.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are very positive in praise of the school, work very supportively with the staff and are quick to value the personal support they receive at times of need. A small number of parents expressed some concern about behaviour at playtimes. However, during the inspection inspectors witnessed exemplary behaviour by the pupils in and out of lessons. Inspectors also noted the diligence of staff in providing exemplary pastoral care. The pupils' love of school reflects this care and the very close partnership with parents, which gives impetus to the pupils' learning. Typical comments in the parental questionnaires included: 'We are very pleased with St Andrew's School. The atmosphere is great, really familiar feeling. Our son is very happy and so are we'; 'St Andrew's has been brilliant, not only with my child, but with me as well'; and 'This school deserves an outstanding report because every element of it is outstanding.' Inspection findings reflect these views. Almost all those associated with the school, and inspectors too, identify St Andrew's as a 'Beacon of Care' within the community and rightly celebrate its key role and excellent service in promoting good will, mutual respect and community cohesion.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children's skills on entry are well below those levels expected. In response to outstanding provision they really enjoy school and make excellent progress in all areas of learning. There is an optimum balance of adult-led and child-chosen activity, both indoors and outside. Staff make sure that new learning is drawn just as effectively from children's learning choices, during

'roundabout activities', as it is from tasks set and led by adults. Examples of the children's excellent learning, particularly in making thoughtful, independent choices, were seen as children interacted supportively in small groups in the pretend ice cream shop and when building their dens in the outdoor area.

Leadership and management are highly effective from the outset, in ensuring that the children's individual needs are assessed and supported and that their welfare is fully safeguarded. Very effective arrangements for children starting school and continuing and very close consultation with parents result in outstanding relationships with families of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff are particularly supportive of families in need. Parents and carers are extremely appreciative and greatly value the school. As a result, most children do best in developing positive attitudes to school. Staff implement innovative and very effective approaches to developing the children's writing. These include, for example, 'writing charts', which record, reward and encourage the children's good efforts during their freely chosen writing sessions. The children respond very enthusiastically indeed to this approach and make significant gains in their writing skills. Even so, given their very low starting points, whilst many children reach average standards overall, some children do not reach the level of skill expected on entry to Year 1.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality of teachers' marking so that there is more consistency in the way that teachers give pupils a clear picture of what they have to do to improve.

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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

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	1

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B**

**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

24 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's C of E VA Primary School, Plymouth, PL1 3AY

We really enjoyed our visit to your school and would like to thank you for being so welcoming. You told us how much you enjoy being at school and we were particularly impressed by your excellent manners and behaviour and by the way you try hard in lessons. We judged that St Andrew's is an outstanding school. I am sure that you knew this already as you, and almost all your parents who responded in the questionnaire, said the same.

These are the other main things we found.

- You really enjoy learning, make outstanding progress and reach above average standards.
- All staff work extremely well together and make sure that their teaching, the quality and range of learning activities and the care they provide are of the highest quality. As a result, you know how to live very healthily and safely and by the time you leave you are extremely well prepared for the future.
- Your headteacher provides outstanding leadership in making sure that the school is a caring community that works very supportively with your parents. He receives excellent support from staff and governors.

Even the best of schools can improve and so we have identified one main thing for the teachers to do that would help you to achieve even more.

- Make sure that pupils are given clear information about how to improve when marking their work.

You can help by thinking very carefully for yourself about how to improve.

Thank you again for your kind assistance and best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Alex Baxter

Lead inspector