

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Fontmell Magna

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113800
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	325887
Inspection date	20 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Deborah Zachary

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)	186
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	Jan Simmons
Headteacher	Catherine Chalk
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Fontmell Magna Shaftesbury SP7 0PF
Telephone number	01747 811500
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

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

- the progress of lower ability pupils in Key Stage 2
- the provision for the most able pupils, and its impact
- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Description of the school

St Andrews is a small school but has a rising roll. It draws its pupils from the village and surrounding countryside. The very large majority of pupils are from a White British background. A broadly average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but they are not evenly spread between the year groups. The school provides for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage. These pupils are in the Panda Class.

At the time of the inspection the substantive headteacher was on maternity leave and an acting headteacher had been in post for five weeks. There was also an acting deputy headteacher. The substantive headteacher was in school for part of the inspection day.

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. Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards because they are well taught. Their personal development is outstanding, as is the school's curriculum. Though there have been significant changes to the leadership of the school over the last six months, leadership and management are good. A range of strategies has been put in place to improve provision for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where children are currently making satisfactory progress.

Achievement in Key Stage 1 is very good. In 2008 the Year 2 pupils reached well above average standards in reading and writing. Though their standards were not as high in mathematics, they entered the key stage with lower standards in this subject so their progress was still very good. Current Year 2 pupils are not reaching such high standards as seen last year, but they joined the school with lower standards and they are learning rapidly. Achievement is good in Key Stage 2. The 2008 test results show pupils made gains in English, mathematics and science that were slightly above the rate typically seen nationally. In addition, the pupils achieved particularly well in some other subjects thanks to the school's very wide-ranging curriculum. Parents are rightly very positive about music and the school orchestra, artwork is of a high standard, and able pupils receive many opportunities to excel, particularly in the upper year groups. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and lower ability pupils are supported well, and this ensures that they are able to access quite challenging work in class. The school draws well on outside expertise to support these pupils and they make similar progress to their peers. Teachers' planning is generally good and it usually ensures that pupils of differing ability are set work that is targeted well to their needs. The pupils benefit from good guidance on how to improve their work.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their lessons, and the extra activities, including a good range of sports. The classrooms are stimulating places in which to learn and teachers often use resources very well to engage pupils' interest. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, who respond with excellent behaviour, both in lessons and around the school. The playground is extremely well equipped, in part thanks to the legacy left by each departing Year 6 group. They choose a gift to leave for the younger children and raise funds to buy it, doing much of the organisation themselves. Throughout the school, pupils take responsibility in a very wide range of ways. Year 6 get valuable practice for job applications, applying for positions on 'ECM' committees where, working with teachers and governors, they consider things like improving the health and safety of all the children in the school. The pupils who were interviewed had an exceptionally good understanding of how to stay healthy, and they and others in the playground said they felt extremely safe. They commented, 'Everyone cares for each other.' A few parents had some concerns about safety in the playground and at the start and end of the school day, but the school is meeting all safeguarding requirements and is taking good care of the children.

Pupils are extremely well equipped for their future lives. They develop excellent social skills and are reflective and articulate. They are very keen to ensure everyone is included and valued. They have a good understanding of global issues such as the need to protect animal species. They are taught about the range of cultures in modern Britain and one of the residential visits allows them to sample life in a city. During the inspection, Year 2 pupils discussed the jobs people do in the wider world and offered a good range of ideas.

The headteacher has developed a strong atmosphere of teamwork in the school. Parents praise the 'great community spirit' and 'marvellous effort and enthusiasm of the staff'. Significant improvements were made last year to the provision for writing after the school leadership identified it as a weakness, partly through their significantly improved assessment system. The acting headteacher has built very well upon the strong base already established in the school. She has analysed what needs to be done and rightly focused on starting to improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although the school identifies the right areas to work on, the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation are not always recorded effectively and so analysis is not as systematic as it might be. A wide range of good quality monitoring activities takes place, carried out by managers at all levels. Teachers are monitored once a year for their statutory performance management, although not all teachers have their lessons observed at other times. The records of observations that do take place do not always identify points for improvement or formally follow up past observations. Assessment data are recorded, but not in a format that makes analysis of progress easy. Nevertheless, the effective improvements already carried out and the accurate identification of areas that need to be improved show that the school has good capacity to improve further. Governance is well organised and the chair of governors has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governors are well aware of their duty to promote community cohesion and have clearly evaluated the school's good work in this area.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Pupils' skills are assessed on entry to the school and their achievements are recorded throughout the year. These records indicate that pupils enter with a wide range of skills and abilities and make satisfactory progress from their varied starting points. When the children currently in Reception joined the school, their skills were broadly as expected for their age in some respects, for example in mathematics, but below the levels expected in writing. The records are not routinely analysed, but checks during the inspection indicated the children have made satisfactory progress. Parents greatly appreciate the way their children are helped to settle and the way they are looked after. Their personal development is good. They are generally well behaved and kind and careful of each other. They lose concentration and can become irritable when kept too long on a formal activity or when work is insufficiently challenging. Other activities allow them better opportunities to learn in small blocks of time, for example when they have choices between making rockets out of small bricks, doing jigsaws or playing at 'word lotto'. There is some use of the outside area, but children did not use a wide range of equipment when observed during the inspection. Session plans do not consistently identify a good balance of activities across the early learning goals, even though longer-term plans show that the right areas are covered over the course of the year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensuring that sessions planned for children consistently involve a wide range of challenging activities across the early learning goals.
- Fine tune systems for monitoring and evaluation, simplifying systems for recording assessments, observing all teachers more frequently and recording and following up areas for improvement.

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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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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?	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	1
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 learners' needs?	2
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?	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
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**

21 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Fontmell Magna, Shaftesbury
SP7 0PF

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited your school yesterday, and particular thanks to those of you who gave us your views about the school. We think you go to a good school where there are some really impressive things going on.

Your teachers do a good job of making sure that you do well in your work. The standards you reach by the time you leave at the end of Year 6 are above those we often see in primary schools. The grown-ups take good care of you, and make sure all of you get the right help, even if you are struggling in your work or if you learn very quickly. But the things that impressed us most were the wide range of things you do at school – especially in art and music – and above all the way you develop into responsible, caring and very well-behaved citizens of the future.

The grown-ups at your school are always keen to make things better. They have already made sure that your writing has improved, and we have asked them to focus on two more things.

- Although your overall progress is good, it is faster in some year groups than others and we think that those of you in Reception would do better with a wider range of activities in your lessons.
- The leaders check on how well the school is doing, but they could do this in a more focused way to make sure that teaching gets better and better and you continue to do well in your work.
- We would like to wish you all the best for the future, and wonder if you can do your bit to help by thinking of things you would like to see improved

Yours faithfully

Deborah Zachary

Lead inspector