

# St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115069
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	326122
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Milton

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	132
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>	Mrs The Hon Rebecca Poynter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Maria Trappitt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 July 2006
<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>	Church Road Great Yeldham Halstead CO9 4PT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01787 237235
<b>Fax number</b>	01787 238371

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 May 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

## Description of the school

Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds in this small village school, and no one uses English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion who need additional learning support, including those with statements of special educational needs, is above average. The specific needs of these pupils vary a great deal and include some that are complex. The range of their needs includes emotional and behavioural difficulties, medical problems and difficulties with spelling and reading. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Reception class. Three of the five class teachers joined the school in January 2009. The school holds several national awards. It received a Royal Opera House Creative Partnership Award for this year and next. A pre-school group, Acorns pre-school rents space from the governing body for children aged two to four years.

## 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 good school. It has both outstanding features and areas for improvement. Parents are very pleased with the school. One parent wrote, 'St Andrew's is a good school. It is encouraging, supportive and eager to move forwards with the children continually.' This is because the headteacher provides very good leadership and works effectively with other members of the senior leadership team. Together, they have ensured that the recent staff changes have worked smoothly and created a staff team committed to improving the pupils' education. As a result, the school has made good progress since the last inspection, especially in improving pupils' standards in English and their personal development as well as the quality of the curriculum and care, guidance and support. The school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Children join the Reception class with knowledge and skills below those expected for their ages with particular weaknesses in linking sounds to letters and in using numbers. They make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage and achieve average standards when they start Year 1. During Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress because the teaching is satisfactory and, by the end of Year 2, usually reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. During Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress because of effective teaching combined with their exemplary behaviour, good rates of attendance and enthusiasm to learn. As a result, standards are above average by the end of Year 6, particularly in English. Standards in mathematics and science are improving. However, there are some inconsistencies in pupils' accuracy and use of different calculation methods in mathematics, and assessment is not always used effectively to help pupils learn as much as possible. Pupils carry out well structured scientific enquiries in some classes, but older pupils do not use their scientific knowledge and understanding to explain their experimental findings. As a result of their good progress with information and communication technology (ICT), pupils' standards are above national expectations in this subject. Pupils who need additional learning support make good progress because of high-quality care, effective special provision and good support by teachers and teaching assistants, some of whom are very well qualified.

Teaching is good with some outstanding lessons. Common strengths are good class management, ensuring that pupils know what they are expected to learn, and effectively matching work to pupils' differing learning needs. There is good marking and target setting in a majority of lessons and most pupils know the next steps to improve their work. The very well-planned curriculum has interesting topics that combine different subjects in motivating and enjoyable ways. The outstanding enrichment contributes to pupils' enjoyment of learning and includes a very good range of clubs with high levels of participation, an annual residential course for Years 4, 5 and 6, and working with professionals to plan outdoor learning spaces in the school's grounds. All adults work hard to provide pupils with high-quality care and support. As one parent wrote, 'There's a lovely atmosphere in school; everybody supports each other, and it's a very welcoming place for parents.' There is outstanding support for vulnerable pupils. A good system for tracking and reviewing the progress of each pupil initiates action to follow up any underachievement.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Throughout the school, there are high-quality relationships based on care and respect. Pupils feel secure and this contributes to their high levels of self-confidence and good learning. They make a strong contribution to the school's community through the class and school councils. For example, these led the initiative to divide the playground into zones for different activities which has

increased pupils' enjoyment. The school contributes to the village's activities and, for example, uses the parish church and local woodland as learning resources. It makes a good contribution to community cohesion. The ActiveMark and Healthy School awards recognise the school's contribution to pupils' extremely healthy lifestyles. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being because of their good literacy and ICT skills, and their excellent personal development.

Governance is good. The school accurately knows its strengths and areas for improvement. There have been recent changes to the leadership of several subjects. The new leaders have already started to make improvements but have had insufficient time to make a significant impact on pupils' achievement.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Children make good progress during their Reception year and usually have the skills and abilities that are expected of five-year-olds when they join Year 1. Their personal, social and emotional development are particularly strong. Children have excellent relationships with each other and adults, they sustain their concentration with the challenges and activities they are given or choose, and they are enthusiastic learners keen to talk about what they are doing. Excellent links with parents also help children to make good progress.

Teaching and learning are good with some outstanding aspects. Adults are skilled at developing children's communication skills and understanding. There is a wide variety of interesting, practical activities that children enjoy both in the classroom and the outside area. Teaching is based carefully on the detailed assessment of each child's progress. Occasionally whole-class sessions are too long and some children lose their concentration.

The well-planned curriculum gives a good balance between activities that adults direct and those that the children can choose. As part of a national scheme, the children visit a local wood every other week and use it as a learning resource for a wide range of activities. There is outstanding provision for children's welfare. The adults model high-quality care for others and children are involved in identifying any potential hazards when they visit the wood. The outdoor play and learning area does not have a shelter to be used in poor weather.

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

- Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that all pupils use different calculation methods confidently and accurately, and that assessment is used consistently well in all classes.
- Raise standards in scientific enquiry by helping all pupils to use their scientific knowledge and understanding to explain the findings of their experiments.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

In the 2007 and 2008 national assessments, Year 2 pupils' results matched national averages for reading, writing and mathematics. Year groups are smaller in this school than in most and, occasionally, this results in marked differences in average ability. Although their achievement is satisfactory, the overall standards of the current Year 2 are lower, reflecting potential. In some years, a high proportion of pupils need additional support, for example, for spelling and reading and personal difficulties. Support is effective in enabling pupils to make good progress. Year 6 pupils' standards are above average in English because of improvements to teaching

and the curriculum as a result of very effective subject leadership and a good range of staff training. Pupils make good progress and reach above-average standards in ICT because their classes have ready access to well-maintained laptops and a good range of software, and their progress is carefully assessed. Many pupils use presentation software effectively for a range of audiences and also skilfully create three-dimensional designs. Challenging targets are helping to raise pupils' standards, which can be higher still, particularly in mathematics and science.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' outstanding personal development is reflected in their strong support for charities, excellent relationships with each other and adults, and very effective collaboration when working in groups. As well as reflecting on their own feelings, pupils are considerate towards the feelings of others, as shown by the school council's introduction of a friendship stop and play leaders. They value, in the words of one pupil, 'being friends with everybody'. Pupils develop a good understanding of the variety of cultures in Britain through the curriculum and wide range of visits and visitors. Many sports clubs and sporting activities contribute to pupils' extremely healthy lifestyles – including the school's own swimming pool, the gardening club and the involvement of each class in cooking healthy meals. They behave very safely around the school and in play areas. Pupils develop their financial skills as the school council has a small budget and, during their time at the school, all have opportunities to buy and sell items in different contexts, including produce grown by the gardening club.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers manage the work of groups effectively. Teaching assistants give good support to individuals and groups in all parts of lessons. The school has made effective improvements to marking since the last inspection. In most lessons, thorough marking gives pupils clear feedback about their achievements and identifies their next steps of learning as well as involving them in assessing their own work. In the best lessons, concluding activities add to pupils' learning as well as providing opportunities for assessment. Occasionally, these activities give insufficient challenge. In the outstanding lessons, there is a focus on improving pupils' thinking and problem solving skills, and pupils are given clear, step-by-step teaching so that they respond effectively to challenging work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The very well-planned curriculum meets the needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes. It is greatly enriched by a variety of themed days and weeks, such as the science, dance and multicultural events. There are extremely good links between subjects, such as the use of literacy, geography, religious education and art, in the World War II topic. Each term, there is a drama or musical production all of which involve the whole school. There are many visitors, such as the Young Shakespeare Company. Each class makes a termly visit to support its classroom work such as to the Science Museum. Partnerships with two local secondary schools contribute to pupils' very good sporting opportunities. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to learn about communities in other parts of Britain and the wider world, although they

have few opportunities to engage with children from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is especially effective and includes a course run by the police.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The pupils have contributed to the very effective behaviour-management procedures. Parents value the drop-in sessions held at the school by external specialists to support pupils and their families. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and meet requirements, and the necessary health and safety checks are carried out. Excellent links with parents make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Termly parents' meetings include the children and are organised to enable as many parents as possible to attend. Parents receive very good levels of information from the school's well structured, detailed website and weekly newsletters. The progress of individual pupils is tracked each half term towards their personal challenging targets. This tracking is used regularly to identify and follow up any underachievement.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher gives clear strategic direction for the continued improvement of the school and its excellent partnerships with parents and a wide range of organisations. Parents make a strong contribution to pupils' learning by, for example, refurbishing the swimming pool, providing many new resources and supporting food technology sessions. Under the helpful leadership of its well-informed chair, the governing body has improved its effectiveness. The chair knows the further improvements that are needed, including improvements to the evaluation of progress with the school improvement plan. Members carry out good quality monitoring visits. There is a comprehensive, systematic programme of monitoring and evaluation. School self-evaluation is accurate and has been used to great effect to improve pupils' achievement in English. Planning is underway to accomplish similar improvements in other main subjects. The award of the Inclusion Quality Mark reflects the care for every pupil which is at the heart of the school's work. It is a cohesive community where pupils gain a strong sense of common values and respect each other's differences. The headteacher has a key role in local partnerships of schools and of community stakeholders. The school provides a rich learning environment and is taking steps for further improvement as part of its Royal Opera House Creative Partnership.

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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?	1
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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
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**

13 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Great Yeldham CO9 4PT

I really enjoyed visiting your school and meeting your headteacher, the chair of the governing body, the staff and many of you. Thank you for making me so welcome. It was good to talk to you in lessons and in the meeting with pupils from Courtauld class. I was very interested to hear that the school council is helping the school to improve. It was good to hear that you feel very safe at school, have an extremely good understanding of how to live healthy lives and know how to improve your work. I was most impressed by your really good behaviour, your high rates of attendance and the friendliness of your school. I will remember the wonderfully made 'skyscrapers' in Courtauld class for a long time.

You make good progress in learning English, mathematics and science. This is because teaching is good, you have interesting things to learn and you know what you need to do to improve your work. You reach higher standards in English than in mathematics and science, and I have asked the school to take steps to raise your standards in mathematics and science. The pupils from Courtauld class were very clear as they showed me their impressive ICT work.

The school is excellent at helping you develop as people. You are keen to learn and work very well together in groups. Everyone takes very good care of you and makes learning enjoyable through all the clubs, visits and visitors. You have good opportunities to work in the local community, including the links with your parish church.

You can all help the school to improve by continuing to behave so well and trying to learn as much as you can.

I wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully

Michael Milton

Lead inspector