

# St Andrew's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 123477              |
| Local Authority         | Shropshire          |
| Inspection number       | 327918              |
| Inspection dates        | 10–11 February 2009 |
| Reporting inspector     | Mark Sims HMI       |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Type of school                     | Primary  |
| School category                    | Foundation   |
| Age range of pupils                | 4–11   |
| Gender of pupils                   | Mixed  |
| Number on roll                     |  |
| School (total)                     | 72   |
| Appropriate authority              | The governing body                                 |
| Chair                              | Mrs Rachel Warner                                  |
| Headteacher                        | Mrs Louise Whitgreave                              |
| Date of previous school inspection | 28 February 2006                                   |
| School address                     | Hopton Lane<br>Nesscliffe<br>Shrewsbury<br>SY4 1DB |
| Telephone number                   | 01743 741331                                       |
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## Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited five lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, a representative from the local authority, staff and groups of pupils. He observed the school's work and looked at: the school's systems for tracking pupils; school policies; the evidence for monitoring of teaching; the governing body minutes and safeguarding documentation. Inspection questionnaires were received from 34 parents.

The inspection looked in detail at the following.

- The link between the quality of teaching and learning and the progress pupils make from Key Stage 1 to 2.
- The quality of provision in science.
- The impact of the curriculum on pupils in small cohorts and mixed-age classes.
- The quality of support and guidance for vulnerable pupils.

## Information about the school

St Andrew's is a very small primary school, situated in rural Shropshire. There are three mixed-age classes. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and none are at an early stage of learning English. The current proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average but, because of the small number of pupils in the school, this percentage varies considerably from year to year. The degree of pupil mobility is higher than that found nationally and the level of social deprivation is very low. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. St Andrew's holds a Healthy Schools award. There is onsite childcare provision that is not managed by the governing body.

## Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

### Main findings

St Andrew's is a good school that has improved since its last inspection. The headteacher brings an infectious drive and passion for education which is picked up by staff, governors, pupils and parents alike. According to one parent, 'The enthusiasm of the staff, especially the headteacher, is paramount in this school.' When one pupil was asked whether there was anything she did not like at St Andrew's, she replied, 'going home'.

Pupils do well in their learning as a result of the good teaching they receive. They join the school with very different starting points. They progress well in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that by the time they leave at the end of Year 6 they achieve levels in English and mathematics that are higher than the national average. Results are not quite as high in science. Teachers involve learners in stimulating practical activities that encourage them to talk about their work although, given the wide range of ages and needs within each teaching group, the tasks are not always accessible to everyone.

The behaviour of the pupils is a major strength of the school, as is the quality of the care they receive. Everyone within the school community recognises that the children are safe and encouraged to live healthy lifestyles. The school places a high emphasis on the care and safety of all its pupils and serves the needs of its most vulnerable children well. The headteacher has wisely ensured that responsibilities within the school are shared and a sense of teamwork prevails. This is evident in the approach to development planning and the distribution of roles and responsibilities among the staff. The involvement of governors and the wider community ensures pupils enjoy a wide-ranging curriculum (including French for all) and an extensive choice of clubs for such a small school.

The headteacher has a strong focus on monitoring teaching and tracking progress to bring about improvements. This was seen in the marking of pupils' work in literacy. The written feedback informs pupils clearly about how they can improve and provides them with the chance to evaluate how well they have done. This is not as well embedded in other subjects such as science. Close tracking of pupils' progress and the teachers' own thorough knowledge of their class ensure that those who need it are given early and appropriate help and guidance. The school demonstrates that it has a good capacity to improve under the headteacher's dynamic leadership.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in science by ensuring pupils know how well they are doing and how they can improve further.
- Develop opportunities for pupils to work independently by ensuring that the full range of learning needs is met in lesson planning.

## How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

|   |
|---|
| 2 |
|---|

Achievement in the school is good. The progress of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with that of their peers in the school. Pupils join the school at very different starting points but overall they are broadly at the level expected for their age. By the time they leave at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are above the expected level of attainment in English and mathematics whereas their attainment in science is broadly average. The school has worked hard and successfully to raise standards in English and mathematics and is now prioritising science for further development.

Pupils enjoy their learning. Their level of attendance is very high and no pupil has been excluded. Behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the building is excellent. Older ones assist younger readers readily and they are always prepared to help with responsibilities around the school. Pupils contribute ideas and suggestions through the school council where they suggested the purchase of tennis racquets for the school. Similarly, pupils were actively involved in the campaign to save the school from closure by writing letters for a real purpose. The school is very much at the heart of the village and local community police officers attend regular community lunches. Pupils thrive on responsibilities, acting as librarians and break time monitors organising the fruit and milk. They have an outstanding awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles and those who do not take up the local authority's award-winning healthy school meals bring a balanced packed lunch which always includes fruit. The importance of regular exercise is regularly stressed. Many pupils walk to school and there are numerous occasions through physical education and after-school clubs when they can take part in regular sport.

The pupils are a credit to the school. They act with maturity and responsibility when they contribute to class discussions, and respect the views and feelings of others. A reflection area is available to all pupils and is located centrally in the school, signifying its importance. The area is used well by pupils to think about and record their feelings. The local vicar is a regular contributor to assemblies to help pupils with their spiritual development. Pupils' cultural experiences are well developed. Work and displays of Islamic patterns and the Chinese New Year remind pupils of the diversity found within the United Kingdom. Their highly developed literacy and numeracy skills ensure they are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 2 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress  | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress            | 2 |
| How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?  | 2 |
| To what extent do pupils feel safe?   | 1 |
| How well do pupils behave?  | 1 |
| To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?  | 1 |
| To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?  | 2 |
| Pupils' attendance  | 1 |
| How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being? | 2 |
| What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?                                | 2 |

## The quality of the school's work

Teaching is generally good. Lessons are well planned to include practical activities and time for whole-class discussions. Pupils work very well with each other and have very good relationships with their teachers. Many lessons are characterised by a sense of fun and enjoyment. Opportunities for pupils to take a greater responsibility for their own learning in lessons are underdeveloped except in one instance when they took part in selecting their learning objectives and assessing for themselves how well they did. Elsewhere lessons are too teacher led and there is further scope to ensure the needs of the wide ranges of age and abilities in classes are all met.

Pupils' work is regularly marked and assessed by teachers. Pupils' progress is tracked regularly and this enables the school to intervene early when a pupil is falling behind by providing additional support. Teaching assistants are highly skilled and deployed well to meet the needs of learners who require additional help. Their role is not always clear on lesson planning, however. Older pupils usually know what level they are working at in English, mathematics and science and what their targets are but their exercise books do not always reflect this information.

For such a small school, it offers a wide variety of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils experience a full range of curriculum subjects taught by knowledgeable teachers and supplemented by governors, outside agencies or volunteers. For example, all pupils have the opportunity to study French and music, both taught by specialists. Pupils enjoy and benefit from mixed-age groups where younger ones appreciate the help and support of older pupils. There are growing, but as yet underdeveloped opportunities for all pupils to use information and

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<sup>1</sup> Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low.

communication technology regularly. Older pupils take laptops home to complete homework but younger pupils report that they have limited experience of computers. All staff are involved in running clubs and pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of extra school activities on offer. As all staff are involved in running clubs, there is a wide range on offer. The involvement of Shrewsbury Town Football Club ensures pupils receive regular professional football training.

Support, guidance and care and for all children are good. Vulnerable children who have experienced difficulties in other schools settle well at St Andrew's and are well cared for. One carer of looked-after children said, 'They look forward to going to school.' Pupils know they are safe and secure in school and feel confident to ask adults for help when needed. Transition arrangements are very good. The mixed-age class arrangements make the transition between key stages run smoothly and there are good links with the main feeder secondary school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| High quality teaching and purposeful learning  | 2 |
| Effective assessment   | 2 |
| An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations | 2 |
| Support, guidance and care   | 2 |

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management in the school are good and improving all the time. The headteacher leads by example in setting out and sharing her vision for the school. Following a large turnover of staff she is training staff to take on increasing levels of responsibility. Teamwork is strong and a distributed leadership style ensures that there is not over dependence on the headteacher. All the teaching staff and governors are involved in development planning and self-evaluation which gives everyone a shared sense of ownership of the school's priorities. There is a clear focus on monitoring the quality of teaching, and governors, teachers and the headteacher are involved in this process.

The school places a very high emphasis on child protection procedures and all staff, including the governors, have received appropriate training. All visitors and volunteers are routinely checked as part of the school's rigorous safeguarding procedures. Governors play a very active role in the life of the school. They are well informed and knowledgeable about the performance of the school in national tests and they take part in lesson observations. This enables them to be well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The parental development team helps the school to communicate with parents and carers in order to hear their concerns and views of the school. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. The headteacher plays a leading role in ensuring that equal opportunities and cultural diversity are promoted in St Andrew's.

Whilst there is little diversity within the local community the school has established links with schools in Birmingham and India and has joined an inter-faith group based in Wolverhampton. Several parents commented favourably on how the school is at the heart of the local community. 'The school is an asset to the village,' according to one parent. The school makes effective use of its resources and provides good value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Communicating ambition and driving improvement  | 2 |
| Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination   | 2 |
| Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective   | 1 |
| Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met    | 2 |
| Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being | 2 |
| Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services  | 2 |
| Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion   | 2 |
| Deploying resources to achieve value for money  | 2 |

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There is no separate class for children of reception age as they are taught alongside Year 1 pupils. Nevertheless they experience an extensive range of well planned activities across all six areas of learning. Their class is well resourced and supported by experienced and knowledgeable staff who are able to meet their specific needs. They have an extensive knowledge of the children and their next steps in learning. This ensures that children make good progress. In particular the mixed-age class enhances the children's communication and language skills and helps them mature personally, socially and emotionally. Children behave very well and have good relationships with each other. They can dress themselves sensibly after physical education and listen well during guided reading sessions.

Children learn new letters and sounds through regular phonics sessions where their progress is recorded. However, when they work in pairs it is not always clear how each individual has progressed. There are regular opportunities for children to learn outside by making use of the extensive natural resources of a rural school. They are suitably dressed for outdoor activities on cold days.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 2 |
| What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?       | 2 |



|   |   |
|---|---|
| How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?                                   | 2 |
| Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 2 |

## Views of parents and carers

This was a no-notice inspection so parents were given very little time to fill in the questionnaires. Nevertheless about half of all parents responded by the second day of the inspection. The overwhelming majority of parents were fully satisfied with the school in all aspects. Parents agree that the school keeps their children safe and makes sure they maintain healthy lifestyles. Additionally almost all parents agreed that their children enjoy school. The very high number of positive comments commended the leadership of the school, the commitment of the staff and the sense of community that exists within the school. There were no trends in the very small number of critical comments received although overall parents were not overwhelmingly positive with the statement that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. Just over a half of the parents who responded felt the school always took account of their views, and the majority of the remainder thought the school did so most of the time.

## What inspection judgements mean

| Grade   | Judgement    | Description   |
|---------|--------------|---|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding  | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007–8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.  |
| Grade 2 | Good         | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007–8, 49% of schools were judged good.   |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007–8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.   |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate   | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007–8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate. |

## Common terminology used by inspectors

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Attainment:                | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.  |
| Progress:                  | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.   |
| Achievement:               | an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory. |
| Capacity to improve:       | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.  |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.  |



12 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's CofE Primary School, Nesscliffe, SY4 1DB

You will know that I recently came for an unannounced inspection visit to your school last week. I very much enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about the school.

I think you go to a good school that is improving all the time. Most of you and your parents said this too. Your headteacher is leading you well and inspiring you all to do as well as you can. I was particularly impressed with how well you are looked after and kept safe. You are very aware of the importance of healthy living through exercise and eating the right food and most of you come to school regularly.

You are doing well in English and mathematics particularly, and you have said how much you enjoy all the extra activities and clubs on offer to you.

I shared a few things with your headteacher which I hope will help your school to get even better in the future. They are:

- to make sure you do as well in science as you do in English and mathematics by letting you know exactly what you can already do and what you still need to do to get better results
- to give you more opportunities in lessons to plan your work and do tasks that are suitably challenging for you.

I would like to wish you all the very best for your future.

Mark Sims  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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