

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123803
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	327993
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Steffi Penny HMI

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)	233
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	Mark Hewlett
Headteacher	Paul Sheehan
Date of previous school inspection	4 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Grove Terrace Taunton TA2 6HA
Telephone number	01823 275906
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school situated in the north of Taunton. The vast majority of pupils have a White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. Compared with the national picture, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly lower than average. Most of these pupils have very significant needs and often have speech and communication difficulties. The school does not have a grassed play area attached to it.

Some of the Reception children are taught alongside those in Key Stage 1. The six areas of learning are covered throughout each week, either discretely or through activities parallel with appropriate subject areas in Key Stage 1.

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 where pupils achieve well. It has significant strengths on the pastoral side which have resulted in the very successful promotion of pupils' self-esteem. Parents expressed the views of the majority when they said, 'We feel the headteacher is outstanding in his drive to make St Andrew's an excellent school... all the staff are excellent and doing a great job... it is a caring and nurturing environment... as a parent I feel well informed and supported.'

The Early Years Foundation Stage works effectively to ensure that children make good progress towards the early learning goals. The transition to Key Stage 1 is enhanced by the opportunities for mixed-age learning and appropriate levels of challenge and support. This helps those children who have not reached the early learning goals to be with their peer groups whilst they catch up. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout the school. Standards in Key Stage 1 are now at the national average and those in Key Stage 2 are above. There are some differences between the attainment of boys and girls but this is not reflected in the progress and achievement that they make. The school sets challenging targets for all aspects of its work; these are regularly met and often exceeded.

Recent changes to the curriculum and good teaching help to make pupils really enjoy their education. Links between subjects through topic-based work give full coverage of the National Curriculum whilst making learning relevant and purposeful. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use questions skilfully to draw out pupils' understanding. Although a good variety of activities is used in class, pupils sometimes do not have enough opportunities to solve problems for themselves and learn independently. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) very well to support pupils' learning. A special feature of the school is the podcast that pupils make. Although regular and supportive, the marking of pupils' work is not always clear enough for pupils and their parents/carers to know how well they are performing against their individual targets nor how to improve their work.

Provision for the most vulnerable children is organised exceptionally well and as a consequence, these pupils, based on their capabilities and starting points, make excellent progress, achieve outstandingly well and their attainment reflects their potential. Staff identify and develop pre-emptive support that is personalised to the individual needs of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are vulnerable to underachievement. They are able to do this because they are well qualified, highly skilled and experienced, having a comprehensive understanding of the individual's needs.

Pupils have a clear understanding about healthy living and how to remain safe. In spite of limited outdoor space, both the boys' and girls' football teams are at the top of the local league. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. The quality and amount of music celebrated throughout the school are excellent and nearly all of the pupils can read music by the time they leave. The school band and ensemble groups provide excellent opportunities for team work and for more experienced children to take on coaching roles. Peer mediators make a very good contribution to their own and the wider community. They are active fund raisers and have a good awareness of global issues and the traditions and religions of other countries. Pupils are less aware of how children and their families from other backgrounds and heritages contribute to life in Great Britain. They are also less secure in their understanding of commerce, enterprise and trade. The school is aware of this and has gone some way to increasing pupils' knowledge. The respect they show to adults and each other is

exemplary. The way that children who have significant learning difficulties are fully integrated into the life of the school is a key feature of what makes this school truly inclusive.

The systems to support and safeguard pupils are robust. The careful monitoring and tracking of pupils' academic, personal, social and emotional progress ensure that, when needed, creative support and interventions are put in place quickly and are adjusted as circumstances change. The evaluation of the school's work is honest. The school knows itself well and sets the right targets to make it even better because of good leadership, management and governance. Outstanding partnership work with a wide range of agencies provides social, emotional, educational and practical support for pupils and their families.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Leadership and management are good and all staff play an active role in improving provision and monitoring progress. Good arrangements for assessing children indicate that the levels of their skills and abilities are below and in some cases well below those expected for their age on entry, particularly in literacy and social development. Good teaching, continuous assessment and the use of a new phonics programme which links sounds and letters ensure that children make good progress, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Children work and play in a caring, safe and stimulating environment, with clear routines that provide structure and stability. The indoor areas are interesting and provide good opportunities for personal development and to increase basic skills through a well-planned curriculum. The outdoor area is well resourced, encouraging the children to collaborate and make their own choices about activities. However, as the school recognises, the outside provision is not always easy to access in class time and this limits the children's explorations on these occasions.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities in class for pupils to learn independently.
- Ensure that middle leaders improve the quality of academic guidance so that pupils fully understand what they need to do to improve and how well they are progressing against their targets.
- Ensure that pupils have greater first-hand awareness about how children and their families from other backgrounds and heritages contribute to life in Great Britain.
- Increase pupils' knowledge of commerce, enterprise and trade.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Boys and girls achieve equally well throughout the school. Although they make good progress during their first year in school, some children do not achieve the early learning goals before they start Year 1. This is due mainly to the child's level of development when they start school. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are producing work of a standard that is appropriate for their chronological age. A relative weakness remains in pupils' writing. The use of a new phonics programme has improved literacy standards and the achievement of pupils over the past year.

Achievement is good and standards are above average at the end of Year 6, and represent a consistent and improving trend. In the national tests for 2008, the school's unvalidated data show that nearly all pupils met their challenging targets.

For those pupils needing extra support the right intervention procedures are introduced at a very early stage to help. As a result pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, especially those who find it exceedingly difficult to access the National Curriculum, make outstanding progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary; they are polite and confident and show increasing maturity as they move through school, supported well by trained pupil mediators at play times. Pupils are listened to and respected by staff, too. Staff are superb role models, creating a family atmosphere where pupils feel supported, welcome and safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils say that bullying is rare and is swiftly dealt with. The youngest children know about healthy eating and having few sweets so their teeth stay in good condition. They also understand the importance of exercise and that it makes the heart work, which is 'good'. Pupils make good efforts to involve those children with severe learning difficulties in their games of tag, basketball and football at playtimes. They contribute well to the local community by taking on roles of responsibility, which they greatly enjoy. The school council is beginning to represent the views of pupils well. A weakness is the pupils' understanding of finance and commerce.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching and the use of good school-home contacts reinforce pupils' learning. Teachers use a wide variety of interesting activities that make lessons fun and enjoyable. The projects that link across the curriculum help to ensure that pupils' learning is secure and of a good quality. Teachers use ICT very well to structure pupils' understanding. Pupils develop good ICT skills, for example through learning how to control mechanisms and make podcasts. Lessons are carefully planned and well structured. On occasions the pace of them is slower than it could be; when this happens it is mainly due to teachers spending too long talking at the front of the class. There are times when the pupils work together but the number of opportunities for them to be more independent in their learning is too small.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The new and creative ways of delivering the curriculum are having a big impact on the standards that pupils reach. They are rightly proud of their project books, which are beautifully presented and contain a variety of writing styles and information that pupils have researched. The school is rightly aware that pupils' knowledge of enterprise and trade is insufficiently developed and this is already planned as part of the improved curriculum offered.

Most pupils take advantage of the wide range of extra-curricular activities that are available. The football teams and other activities result from the outstanding commitment of all the adults that work, or have children, in the school. The provision for music is exceptional.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral support and care for pupils, especially those who are most vulnerable, are outstanding. Assessment procedures have improved. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is regular and praises the efforts pupils make. However, while some marking identifies how work can be improved, this is inconsistent. Consequently, although pupils know that teachers will help them get better, they do not always know the purpose of their learning targets. The school is aware that the academic guidance given does not make all pupils aware of how they can improve things for themselves. The new management structures are improving the quality of academic support and guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The outstanding leadership and commitment of the headteacher has ensured that over the last 18 months considerable progress has been made in improving the quality of provision in the school. He is ably supported by senior leaders, managers, governors and parents. They have struck a very effective balance between good academic achievement and very positive personal development.

The school has trialled new systems and accountability procedures for individual subjects and these are beginning to have an impact on improving the quality of marking and academic guidance throughout the school. Whilst marking in some learning areas is now secure, the school has realised that middle and subject leaders need to hold staff more to account for the work done in the area that they are leading.

The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Its strengths are in its own community and in its role with partners in the wider local community. A comparative weakness is the pupils' first-hand knowledge of how children and their families from other backgrounds and heritages contribute to life in Great Britain.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	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	1

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

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	1
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**

27 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's Church of England Primary School, Taunton TA2 6HA

Thank you for your warm welcome when we came to inspect your school. We very much enjoyed seeing you in lessons, looking at your work, hearing your wonderful music making and talking with you. A big thank you to those of you who met with us and told us what makes your school good. This letter is to let you know what we found out.

- You told us how much you enjoy being at St Andrew's and that you felt you were doing well. We agree. When we looked at your work and talked to you, it was clear that you are making good progress and achieve well.
- Those children who find learning difficult do really well because of the support that the adults, and just as importantly you, give to them.
- We think that you behave extremely well, both in lessons and around the school. We were very impressed at how the older children were looking after the younger ones and how well the SAMs and PALs teams work.
- You are rightly proud of the music you make and the sports that you do. We loved hearing you play. Well done to the football teams!
- Your teachers have focused well on making improvements in the right places.

You have such wonderful adults who are always looking for ways to make your school an even better place to be! We have asked them to do the following things.

- Give you more chances to learn things for yourself in class.
- Sometimes you make slips with your sums or need help with spelling, punctuation or other things to do with your learning. We have asked the school to make sure this is picked up and that you know how to make your work even better. You can help by letting the adults know when you are not sure how to get something right.
- Make sure that you get to understand the lives of other children and their families from different backgrounds and heritages who live in Great Britain.
- Make sure you have a better understanding about enterprise and trade.

I know you have a great website so if you want to see the full report please go to ours which is at this link: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Thank you for being so polite and helpful during the visit. I hope that you continue to enjoy your learning and do your best. Please thank your parents for the helpful comments they made on the questionnaires.

With my very best wishes for your future.

Steffi Penny

Her Majesty's Inspector