

Arnot St Mary CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135267
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	334684
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	428
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	Rev Trevor Latham
Headteacher	Mr Gary Shaw
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Arnot Street Walton-on-the-hill Liverpool Merseyside L4 4ED
Telephone number	0151 286 1400
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Arnot St Mary's Church of England Primary School was established in September 2008 from the amalgamation of Arnot Community Primary School and St Mary's Church of England Primary School. It is larger than the average of primary schools nationally and currently operates on two sites, Bedford Road and Arnot Street, about half a mile apart. It is anticipated that the whole school will start next term at the refurbished Arnot Street premises. The headteacher has been in place since the amalgamation and a new governing body was formed in January 2009 from the interim joint governing bodies. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is about three times the national average for primary schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average but few have a statement of special educational need. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion learning English as an additional language is low. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two part-time Nursery classes and two classes of Reception-aged children.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for pupils and has made a good start this year despite difficulties of accommodation. On the impressive record of one year's work under its senior leadership team the school has good capacity to improve. Two schools with quite distinct backgrounds have been successfully made into one new school and it is clear from the attitude of pupils, parents, governors and staff that all are proud of this new venture and consider it will become a significant asset to the local community. A parental comment typical of many is, 'The future is very exciting for Arnot St Mary's'.

Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. Children make steady progress overall in the Early Years Foundation Stage and good progress in personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. Progress in some areas of learning such as mathematical development, however, lags behind. Recent data from tracking how well pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 are doing show that progress is accelerating in recent months and this is mainly because of the improved use of assessment to challenge the pupils more. This is having a positive impact on past underperformance. However, there has not been sufficient time to improve standards overall in the current Years 2 and 6, which are below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement has correctly been identified as the first priority in the current school development plan and its improvement is the key to the school's future success. All groups of pupils are making satisfactory and improving progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the very few at the early stages of learning English as an additional language.

Pupils make good progress in their personal development, in particular their social skills. They have a good knowledge of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle and appreciate the school's work to develop this. Pupils enjoy their learning and feel very safe and well supported in school. Behaviour is good and there has been one fixed term exclusion. Levels of attendance are satisfactory overall but too many pupils do not attend regularly enough. The school has good measures in place to raise the attendance of the small number of pupils who do not attend regularly or on time but this remains an aspect for improvement. Overall, pupils develop satisfactory skills to help them with their future schooling and the world of work.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with good features. Some very good teaching was seen but good practice is not consistent across the whole school. For example, there are inconsistencies in how well activities match the needs of different groups of pupils, time in lessons is not always used as effectively as possible and the quality of marking of pupils' work is variable. The curriculum is satisfactory and is in the process of being developed well by the staff. This year staff have assimilated the curricula of both schools and moved this forward into a unified whole. The pastoral care provided for pupils, especially the vulnerable and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good and a major strength of the school. The role of senior leaders, the learning mentor and special needs coordinator have been integral in the effectiveness of this provision.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The capable senior leadership team under the strong guidance and vision of the headteacher is at the heart of developments, the full effect of which is still to be realised. Its self-evaluation processes are good and its views about the school overall match the judgements in this report with few discrepancies. Partnerships with agencies and other schools are good and benefit the personal and academic development of

the pupils. Given the satisfactory outcomes for pupils and quality of provision, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Overall, the skills of the children entering the Nursery in September 2008 were below those typical for children of this age. During their time in the Nursery and Reception classes, the children make steady progress, growing increasingly independent and more skilled in their language. However, most still enter Year 1 working at levels below those expected for their age. In some aspects, children make good progress. For example, progress in communication, language and literacy during the current Reception Year has been very good. Half of the children achieved national expectations for the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage in speaking and listening by the month of March. Staff training in the national project in this area of learning has significantly raised the skills of staff so that children's progress is accelerating in both language skills and personal, social and emotional development. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement, especially in areas of learning such as mathematical development. Teaching and the learning opportunities provided are satisfactory overall. The welfare of children is promoted effectively. Staff recognise the need to ensure that their planning is more closely built upon their observations and assessments in order to meet the needs of all the children. The leadership and management of the key stage are satisfactory overall. The temporary coordinator has correctly identified the need to ensure that all staff have the skills needed to promote sound learning and has laid a good foundation for the incoming key stage leader next term.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage and raise standards of attainment across in Years 1 to 6 in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- Improve levels of attendance to reach the school's locally agreed targets.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good in all classes in order to promote better learning and achievement.

A small proportion of school where overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in Years 1 and 2 are below average in reading, writing and mathematics but the impact of initiatives to improve reading is helping to lift standards of both reading and writing. Standards of presentation in pupils' books are good and teachers in both key stages are raising their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Nevertheless, hardly any pupils in Year 2 have reached above the expected level in the three subjects and this is an aspect for improvement. Progress in classes in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall. It is good in Year 6. These pupils have been working at a low level of attainment in the past and are still catching up. Standards in Year 6 remain below average and too few pupils are on target to reach Level 5 in English, mathematics and science. Pupils who have been underperforming in the past have been identified well by staff in the last two terms and intervention strategies are proving effective in turning things around. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have made satisfactory progress

during the current school year. They have shown significant gains in recent terms with the implementation of successful intervention and support programmes.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their learning and most are happy to attend regularly. They appreciate the friendliness of the adults and pupils. 'Lessons are fun,' they say because, 'you get to do exciting things, like dissecting a flower in science.' They say that teachers are fair and they feel listened to. Pupils show respect and care for one another, listening to others and contributing well to discussions in classrooms. They say, 'Home and school are like a big family'. Pupils respond very positively to the efforts of lunchtime staff to promote enjoyable, cooperative play. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with cultural awareness developing well through curricular work on other faiths and cultures. All children learn Spanish and this is supported by effective displays about all aspects of the culture and a residential trip to Barcelona. Pupils of all ages take pride in their newly created school and enjoy the greater opportunities for learning and making new friends. They say that the new building 'means we're special'. Responsibilities such as the school council provide pupils with opportunities to develop mature attitudes in preparation for adult life and money is raised by pupils for local and national charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Strengths of teaching and learning include good working relationships, which pupils respond to well with good behaviour and application. They enjoy rising to challenges, such as in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were asked to calculate using a calculator on which the number six was broken. Teachers are very well supported by teaching assistants. When pupils work at a task in pairs or groups they collaborate very well and purposefully. Teachers prepare thoroughly and are usually well focused on what they want the pupils to learn in the lesson. There is good pace to oral sessions although occasionally the less confident pupils are not drawn into the discussion well enough. Tasks are planned to present a suitable challenge for pupils' different levels of ability but expectations of the amount of work to be completed are not always set for different groups. On occasions all pupils stay on the carpet listening to every group's instruction unnecessarily and this also slows the pace of learning. Marking is inconsistent but there are some very good examples of teachers indicating next steps in learning and sometimes of pupils responding to teachers' comments well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum allows pupils to make satisfactory progress in basic skills, as in information and communication technology (ICT). Some good links are made across subjects as in Year 2 when pupils were learning about animal differences and creating sock puppets based on this work. However, pupils do not yet have enough opportunities to practise basic skills in lessons across the curriculum. There is good provision for pupils to learn about the benefits of both healthy lifestyles and safe practices which impacts positively on their personal development and well-being. A good range of visits and visitors is planned to enhance pupils' limited experiences

greatly. Similarly there are good opportunities to experience and solve problems in the real world such as through the Enterprise Club. There is a wide range of after-school clubs and a high take-up by pupils. Spanish makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Links with outside agencies also enhance pupils' skills in sports. While there is some provision for talented pupils, such as in dance, nothing is yet in place for those who are more gifted academically.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe and very well cared for in school and parents also hold the view that the teachers are a very caring group. Support staff are deployed very effectively where need is greatest and this is beginning to result in improved achievement of those pupils. Current government requirements for safeguarding are met fully. Behaviour is monitored well and incidents of poor behaviour or aggressive behaviour are rare. Any are dealt with effectively so that pupils feel safe and free from any bullying. The school works hard to foster relationships with parents and as a result a good number help in school. The work of senior staff and the school's education welfare officer has successfully improved attendance rates and reduced the number of persistent absentees by one third since the school opened. There are now clear procedures for tracking pupils' progress in learning so that the impact of any intervention strategies can be assessed. This enables teachers to guide pupils in what they need to do to improve their attainment. The full impact of this is still to be realised.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders supported by the new governing body have identified accurately what the school needs to do to blossom from the start and have rightly set as their first priority the personal development and academic performance of the pupils. They have successfully brought together into one community two schools from quite distinct backgrounds. Other aspects of community cohesion locally and further afield are in the process of development and are satisfactory overall. Initiatives, such as the introduction and good use of assessment to track pupils' progress, are making a positive start to the raising of standards though their full impact is yet to be felt. The school now tracks well the performance of all groups of pupils to promote equality of opportunity but outcomes are only satisfactory because not enough pupils reach their full potential. Much remains to be done and senior staff are fully aware of this and have good capacity to make improvement. Governors are in the process of developing their roles. Their main work since establishment has been to oversee finance and buildings. This has been very effective and helped smooth the process of school development.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
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?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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	2
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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you very much for your help when we inspected your school. We enjoyed our visit very much. You told us that you feel happy and secure in school and that it is a friendly place to be. You talked a lot about how you find lessons interesting and enjoy learning new things. You said you are very proud of your new school and we were very pleased to hear that.

Now we would like to share with you what we thought about your school. Your school is giving you a satisfactory standard of education. These are some of the things that are good about it:

- all the staff take good care of you and help you all to be fit, safe and healthy
- you are growing into sensible students who want to learn and take on responsibilities well, for instance as school councillors
- your behaviour in class and around school is good
- you know a lot about how to stay safe and lead a healthy, active lifestyle
- those of you who find school work difficult are given good support by teachers and classroom assistants.

Part of my job is to make suggestions about how the school can be even better. There are three important things I have asked the staff to do:

- make sure that you all do as well as you can in school subjects, especially reading, writing, mathematics and science, because at the moment this is not happening
- make sure you all attend school regularly and on time
- make sure that lessons always help you to achieve your best.

You have a big part to play in this: come to school regularly and on time, know your targets, work hard in lessons and do your very best! Most important of all, carry on enjoying life in your new school!