

St Andrew's CofE Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117444
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	339007
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lindsay Steel
Headteacher	Judith Sparks
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons, taught by seven teachers, were observed. Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher and senior leaders, teachers, and representatives of the governing body. The inspectors looked at records of monitoring and evaluation, planning and some of the school's policies and a sample of the pupils' work. Questionnaire responses from pupils and 60 parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the pupils' current learning, and progress made, in English
- the learning and progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- whether children in the Early Years Foundation Stage learn effectively, both in the classroom and outdoors.

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, have special educational needs and/or disabilities, from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language, are all well below the national average. There is a very small number of looked after children.

The school has recently been awarded national Healthy Schools status.

There is a playgroup on the school site which is not managed by the governing body and is subject to a separate inspection.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school where pupils do extremely well because they benefit from some excellent teaching. The school has used its incisive monitoring to ascertain where it can improve and to set about raising attainment in writing. Consequently, results in national tests at the end of Year 6 improved considerably in 2009, and pupils' current work shows that attainment in English is now high. This adds to the already high attainment in mathematics and science, and cements an overall view of attainment that is considerably higher than the national average.

The pupils' learning and progress are outstanding. They respond enthusiastically to the many interesting and challenging tasks that the teachers set them. Throughout the school, expectations are high, so that pupils behave very well, work diligently and present their work very carefully. As a result, they are proud of what they achieve.

From Year 1, the pupils are engaged in assessing how well they have completed the tasks they are set, and by Year 6 they set themselves quite precise criteria against which they can judge their success. This, combined with clear targets and very detailed marking of their work, leads to consistently good progress, because the pupils are always building on what they know and constantly striving to improve their work.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, there is some variation and inconsistency of approach to teaching and learning. The children make a very strong start in the Nursery and, by the end of the Reception Year, are well prepared for Year 1. However, routines, opportunities for active learning and the deployment of adults are not as effective in the Reception class as they are in the Nursery.

The school responded very positively to the last inspection. Self-evaluation is accurate and leaders now rigorously monitor and analyse every pupil's progress and ensure that any pupils who are not making good progress receive the support they need to help them to accelerate their learning. The headteacher and senior leaders have also brought improvement and greater consistency to the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6, which is very evident in the teaching of English. This illustrates very well the school's excellent capacity to sustain improvement.

Many aspects of the pupils' personal development are outstanding. For example, they have an excellent understanding of how to stay fit and healthy, and work together very effectively on a range of activities; this prepares them very well for working with others in later life. The school currently has a detailed programme in place to extend its approach to promoting community cohesion, in order to provide the pupils with more opportunities to learn about the diverse cultures represented in British society today. At the moment, this is not as strong as many other aspects of their personal development.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the excellent provision in the Nursery throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that routines are well established and understood by the children
 - providing a wider range of opportunities which involve the children more actively in their learning and meet their emerging interests and needs
 - ensuring that all adults are fully briefed and clear about their roles.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The pupils are making rapid progress and reaching high standards in English, mathematics and science. The school's efforts to improve attainment in writing have resulted in many older pupils working beyond the level expected for their age: in Year 6, over half of the pupils are working at the higher level in English. There is a very strong emphasis, in many lessons, on the pupils establishing exactly what they need to do to be successful in a task. They are also very keen to improve their work. As a result, they are very open to suggestions from their teachers, and are confident enough to take advice and use it in their writing, which is very well presented. Many of the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the small number of looked after children, are very well supported and, therefore making consistently good progress.

The pupils extend their knowledge and skills particularly quickly in Years 5 and 6, through many interesting and enjoyable tasks that are often thoughtfully linked to the wider curriculum. In Year 5, when pupils were developing their skills of script writing, they confidently performed the conversations they were composing. As part of their geographical comparison of Much Hadham and Swanage, the pupils in Year 6 were using their persuasive writing skills to create leaflets encouraging people to visit both locations. They turn readily to information and communication technology to find information, produce newspapers, and combine text and images using presentation software.

The pupils say they feel safe in school and are very confident that any adult in school would help them if they asked. The pupils make a very strong contribution to the school community, but their contribution to the wider community is not as extensive. Similarly, while their spiritual, moral and social development is very successful, their cultural development, particularly in respect of their understanding of cultural diversity, is not as strong.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The teaching is outstanding in many lessons, notably in Years 3 to 6 where, as a result, the pupils' good progress accelerates. The teachers make good use of their strong subject knowledge and communicate very clearly the skills and knowledge that the pupils need to learn in order to succeed. The teachers' plans take full account of the pupils' needs, and the resulting activities engage and motivate the pupils extremely well. New technologies such as the visualiser are used very effectively to assess, and subsequently improve, pupils' work.

In many lessons, there is a high level of additional adult support. In most cases, adults contribute very effectively and often provide additional support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which ensures that this group of pupils makes progress in line with their peers. However, there are occasions when teaching assistants are not deployed well enough to ensure that they have maximum impact on pupils' progress.

Marking and questioning of the pupils about how they can improve their work are both of a high standard. The older pupils respond maturely to teachers' comments on their work. This contributes very effectively to the constant quest for high attainment and consistently good progress. Pupils are very aware of their targets for improvement. The older pupils feel this helps them to make rapid progress.

The curriculum is wide ranging and includes many interesting experiences for the pupils. They talk animatedly about trips to places of interest and the many clubs they attend. They value the sporting and musical opportunities provided for them.

The school provides very well-targeted support for pupils, particularly those with special

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educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are looked after. Links with families - and, where necessary, other agencies - ensure that any barriers to good progress are, wherever possible, removed.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The governing body brings a range of skills and expertise to the school that has resulted in it developing robust and sharply focused approaches to self-evaluation and improvement planning. Together, these give a comprehensive view of the school's performance. The governing body challenges the headteacher, and minutes of meetings show they routinely 'query' the school's procedures and performance to satisfy themselves that the school is performing well.

The headteacher and senior leaders are constantly seeking to make improvements. The recent successful focus on improving writing exemplifies the effective planning, implementation and evaluation. Although pupils are now performing very well, because the school's provision is excellent, there are still clear plans for further improvement. The school improvement plan sets out a number of areas where provision is to be enhanced further. The senior leadership team is very ambitious, and along with subject leaders, its members share a determination to provide a high-quality education for the pupils.

Monitoring and evaluation are comprehensive. Regular observations of lessons, scrutiny of the pupils' work, and meetings about each pupil's progress provide a detailed insight into what is working well and where improvement can be made. Pupils' progress is analysed to make sure that all groups of pupils are doing well, reflecting the school's very strong commitment to equality of opportunity. Arrangements to ensure that the pupils are safe are satisfactory.

Links with parents and carers are extremely beneficial. Many parents and carers welcome and support events that allow them to find out more about the work of the school. Community cohesion is strongly promoted within the school and through links with a school in Kenya. However, links with a school in a contrasting area in this country are still in their infancy.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children make a very strong start in the Nursery, where there is an excellent balance of activities that flow freely between the indoor and outdoor area. These activities build effectively on the good range of skills and abilities that many children bring with them when they start school. Activities to promote children's understanding of letters and sounds are strongly promoted. Practitioners are highly skilled, and respond flexibly to ensure that the children's needs are well met. The learning environment is vibrant, and adults stimulate learning and conversation through the use of open questions and well-focused interventions.

The children's progress is not as rapid in the Reception class because the routines and organisation which underpin flexible approaches to teaching and learning are not as well established. The children are involved in interesting activities, but some of these do not have sufficient flexibility to ensure that they meet the emerging needs and interests of the children. The adults question children and help them to develop their vocabulary, but they are not always clear enough about their roles, and on occasions opportunities to extend the children's use of language are constrained by arrangements that are too formal. Sometimes, too much time passes with the children not active enough in learning. Nevertheless, they enjoy the activities that are planned for them. This was the case where they were finding out about the different fruits in the story of Handa's Surprise. Tasting a range of fruit proved particularly enjoyable. The mango was 'delicious'.

The adults are thorough in their assessments of each child's progress, carefully observing and noting steps in their development. The standards reached by the children meet, and often exceed, expectations for the end of the Reception Year, with the result

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that they are well prepared for Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers are pleased with the work of the school. Some parents and carers hold the school in particularly high regard, referring to it as 'exceptional', 'excellent', 'outstanding' and 'a really special school'. Others made comments about the considerable commitment shown by the staff, and the warm and welcoming atmosphere.

A few parents and carers expressed concerns about poor behaviour or that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively. During the inspection, one or two very minor instances of unsettled behaviour were seen, and these were dealt with entirely appropriately. The inspectors' conversations and discussions with the pupils brought a consistent response that they were not aware of any bullying, felt free from any intimidation, and would have no hesitation in turning to any adult in school should they feel threatened.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Andrew's CofE Primary School and Nursery to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 60 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 215 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	67	18	30	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	63	19	32	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	50	24	40	4	7	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	52	24	40	4	7	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	35	58	22	37	2	3	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	48	25	42	4	7	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	55	25	42	2	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	30	50	28	47	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	50	26	43	1	2	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	41	25	42	4	7	4	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	38	28	47	6	10	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	27	45	24	40	6	10	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	55	23	38	1	2	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Andrew's CofE Primary School and Nursery, Much Hadham, SG10 6DL

This letter is to tell you about what we found on our recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to the inspectors about your school.

You go to an outstanding school which is very welcoming, and supports you very well in making excellent progress in English and mathematics. You do well because your teachers are doing such a good job. The pupils we spoke to told us how much they enjoy school. Some of you also said that the school provides lots of opportunities, particularly to play sport, that help you to keep fit. The youngest children get off to a very good start, but we have asked the school to keep this going once they get to the Reception class by providing them with more opportunities to learn actively.

The whole school community has high expectations of what you can achieve. The teachers make lessons interesting and enjoyable. They help you by setting your targets and showing you how you can improve in the comments they make when they mark your work.

The headteacher is leading the school extremely well and is constantly looking at how the school can improve. She has plans for you to learn more about other faiths, communities and cultures, so that you can become as knowledgeable about these things as you are in everything else you do at school.

I hope that you continue to really enjoy all that you do at school, and that in the future you achieve as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead inspector

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