

St Andrew's School

Independent school inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002¹, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005², the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was a light touch inspection which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils; and, the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

St Andrew's School was founded in 1951 as a proprietorial school and ten years later moved to its present site on Watts Avenue, close to the centre of Rochester, in Kent. In 1999, the school changed its ownership and belongs to CfBT Education Trust. Currently 357 pupils attend, aged from three to eleven, with 64 children attending part-time and 85 in the Early Years Foundation Stage having their places funded under the nursery grant scheme. There are two pupils who have a statement of special educational needs. There are a small number of pupils who have moderate learning difficulties and specific learning needs. The school operates from two sites. The main school is in Watts Avenue and the pre-school is situated nearby in St Margaret's Street. The last inspection was in February 2007 when the school met most of the regulations for registration.

St. Andrew's School has a non-selective entry and the majority of pupils join from the pre-school as rising five-year-olds. The school's aim is 'to develop well-rounded, enthusiastic learners who will make a strong contribution to their senior schools both as good citizens and as pupils who are prepared to work hard in order to achieve success.'

Evaluation of the school

St Andrew's School provides a good quality of education and successfully meets its aims. The good teaching and curriculum, excellent relationships between staff and pupils and the high expectations that pupils will try their best to achieve their potential ensure that pupils make good progress. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is outstanding and arrangements for the safeguarding and care of pupils are good. The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and ensures that children make a good start to their education. Most parents hold a very positive view of the school, making comments

¹ www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2002/ukpga_20020032_en_14#pt10-ch1-pb4-l1g162

² www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/ukpga_20050018_en_15#sch8

such as 'my children have a great time...St Andrew's is an extremely good school'. The school now meets all of the regulations and has addressed successfully the issues raised at the last inspection, which related mainly to the premises.

Quality of education

The curriculum is good and meets the learning needs of pupils of all abilities effectively, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This was also the case when the school was last inspected. It is well documented, effectively implemented and covers the range of subjects of the National Curriculum with the addition of religious education. French and Spanish are introduced as the pupils move up through the school. The school has extended the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and has also introduced interactive whiteboards in most classes. The amount of physical exercise provided for the pupils in the lower school each week has been increased since the last inspection. All pupils now have an adequate allocation of time for physical exercise, some of which is off site at a nearby sports field. Art, music, French, Spanish, physical education and humanities are taught by specialist teachers. The school supports the less able pupils effectively, including those with a statement of special educational needs, ensuring their good progress. Whilst the curriculum provides strong focus on pupils' academic achievement, with many gaining places at grammar schools locally, their emotional and social development is promoted effectively. The curriculum encourages pupils' good personal development through its personal, social, health and citizenship education programme, ensuring that pupils are confident when facing new challenges on moving to their next school. The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is somewhat limited by the layout of the building which hampers the free flow of indoor and outdoor learning.

A wide range of extra-curricular activities and after-school clubs further enhances the pupils' development. There are a number of visitors to the school and visits made outside school to local and national places of interest. School sports teams participate in local games and CfBT championships. Pupils have had the opportunity to visit *The Guardian/Observer* newsroom each year and have produced an extremely professional newspaper. The older pupils have the opportunity for residential visits both at home and abroad, for example to Normandy.

Teaching and assessment are good, with some teaching occasionally outstanding, as was the case when the school was last inspected. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good. Teachers are often subject specialists with very good subject knowledge and use this to good effect when questioning pupils. As a result, the vast majority of pupils are engaged in and enjoy their learning. In the outstanding lessons, teachers have thought very carefully about the learning needs of all their pupils. The approach is dynamic and varied. This results in many pupils making very good progress in developing their conceptual understanding of the subject. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson about figures of speech, the

consistently stimulating questioning by the teacher, supported by very good use of visual resources, resulted in striking impact on the quality of pupils' learning. Most teaching is consistently good because teachers employ interactive strategies to engage pupils and sustain their motivation. This is supported by a clear structure to the lesson with learning objectives and outcomes communicated effectively. In some less effective lessons teachers have not given sufficient thought to tailoring the lesson to the needs of all groups of pupils. The lesson is pitched at a level appropriate for the majority and, therefore, both the lower and higher attaining pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Assessment is regular and, in the main, is used well to support teachers' planning. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and often give useful feedback for improvement. However, this is not consistent because sometimes the comments are not sufficiently diagnostic and are not linked to clear learning targets for improvement. The systems for tracking pupils' progress are also sound and enable senior leaders to identify underperformance early and organise appropriate interventions. Evidence from first-hand observation and scrutiny of attainment data show that the vast majority of pupils are making consistently good progress.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

The school makes outstanding provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils and the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This aspect has improved since the last inspection. This is a happy, friendly school where the pupils are encouraged to enjoy life. They play together happily, many making comments such as, 'It's great fun here...I love it...everyone plays together.' They are proud of their school and their behaviour is good. The school is a harmonious, respectful community with staff acting as positive role models. Pupils have many opportunities to increase their spiritual awareness through the teaching of religious education, visits to the local church and their study of other religions. They have a good understanding of other cultures and religions, linking these aspects across the curriculum. Racial harmony and cultural tolerance are promoted well throughout the school. Older pupils make a very positive contribution to their own school community through their roles as head boy and girl, house captains and playtime buddies. They take their roles very seriously and their willingness to help each other is impressive. The head boy and head girl believe that their role is to represent their school and set a good example for younger pupils. Older pupils assist and support younger ones and all have a good sense of right and wrong. Pupils' attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy school and have very positive attitudes to learning. Their knowledge of themselves and their self-esteem and confidence are developed effectively. Pupils enjoy and participate enthusiastically in the full range of school activities, playing instruments, taking part in school productions and visiting local residents. They help to initiate and take part in a range of charity and fundraising activities. Pupils' basic skills, including their personal skills, together with their awareness of public services and institutions, prepare them well for their future working lives.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Provision for safeguarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils and of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, as was the case at the last inspection. The very friendly and caring ethos in the school ensures that pupils feel valued and safe. Pupils know that staff care for them well and they report that there is no bullying. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust. The school has an appropriate policy and all staff have received appropriate training. Thorough checks are completed prior to the appointment of new staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. This information is held on a single central register. The school's arrangements for ensuring that the health and safety of pupils meet the regulations are fully implemented. There are very good arrangements for fire safety. Fire drills are held regularly and recorded; fire-fighting equipment is checked by a specialist company; and, a comprehensive fire risk assessment is in place. The attendance registers are now kept according to the regulations. The school has a three-year plan for increasing accessibility which meets the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002.

Pupils demonstrate a mostly good understanding of healthy lifestyles, both through their healthy eating choices at lunch time and their enjoyment of physical activity. They are encouraged to eat healthily but some still bring unhealthy snacks at break time despite being asked to bring an alternative. The large playground where play and lunchtimes are staggered is a busy, purposeful place. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the younger pupils enjoy playing in their own playgrounds. Pupils eat together in the dining rooms, but space and time are both at a premium and the lunch times are rushed, with missed opportunities for social interaction. The school has now addressed the issues relating to the premises. There is now a medical room, all rooms are ventilated adequately and the hot water is temperature controlled.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

St Andrew's School is effective in meeting the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children make good progress in their learning, are well cared for and are happy and settled in the stimulating environment. The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage is effectively implemented, but the layout of the building is not easy for the free flow of indoor and outdoor learning. However, the staff do their best to make this available. Strong links with parents and carers help to involve them in their children's education and parents report that they feel their children are well supported by the kind and caring staff and they are kept well informed about their children's progress. The leadership and management are good. Those in charge have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and take effective steps to improve it. Most children make good progress towards the early learning goals in most areas of learning. There are very positive relationships at all levels. Children play well on their own and with others

and children of all backgrounds and cultures work and play well together. There is a good balance of both activities led by teachers and those initiated by children themselves. Children have many opportunities to choose their activity and the resources are very plentiful. Children behave well and respond to the positive reinforcement and praise from the staff. The activities are planned well and are based upon secure knowledge of the learning and development of children in this age group. Staff make careful observations on the childrens' progress and match the planned activities to the range of their needs. Assessment of children's progress is frequent and detailed, with regular reporting to parents. The premises are attractive and welcoming, but the sets of steps leading on to outdoor play areas are not always easy to access directly from the classroom.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- ensure that all teaching is consistently good by matching tasks to the attainment levels of the pupils
- improve the marking by giving more suggestions on how the pupils can improve their work and meet their learning targets
- maximise the use of the outside areas to enable easier access to the full range of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

Inspection judgement recording form

outstanding	Good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		√		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	√			
The behaviour of pupils		√		

Should this and below be in a colour?

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils		√		
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The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision

How good are the outcomes for children in the EYFS?		√		
What is the quality of provision in the EYFS?		√		
How effectively is the EYFS led and managed?		√		
Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the EYFS?		√		

School details

Name of school	St Andrew's School		
DCSF number	887/6002		
Unique reference number	118985		
Type of school	Pre-school and primary school		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	1951		
Age range of pupils	3-11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 157	Girls: 136	Total: 293
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 33	Girls: 31	Total: 64
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 0	Girls: 2	Total: 2
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4,956–£5,244		
Address of school	St Andrew's School 24-28 Watts Avenue Rochester Kent ME1 1SA		
Telephone number	01634 843479		
Fax number	01634 840789		
Email address	jjabbour@cfbt.com		
Headteacher	Mrs Joan Jabbour		
Proprietor	CFBT Education Trust		
Reporting inspector	Jill Bainton		
Dates of inspection	5 November 2009		