

# St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mill Race, Stanstead Abbots, Ware, SG12 8BZ

**Inspection dates** 12–13 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body provide strong leadership and are constantly seeking to improve the school.
- The early years provision gives children an excellent start to school life through exceptionally high standards in the quality of teaching and provision.
- Lessons are planned well with clear expectations. Homework is set systematically and pupils read regularly at home and in school.
- The school provides excellent opportunities to develop pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural education.
- Attainment in writing is higher than pupils nationally, with the vast majority making more than expected progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with disabilities and special educational needs make good progress in mathematics and writing.
- The school is a caring and nurturing place in which pupils feel safe and are kept safe. Pupils behave impeccably both inside and outside of the classroom. They care for and respect each other and the adults around them.
- Teachers and support staff are dedicated and constantly strive to make further improvements to pupils', and their own, learning.
- Parents are very supportive of, and show great confidence in, the school.
- Governors know the school well, visit regularly and are enthusiastic about their role in school improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils reach the highest levels of attainment in reading and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not make enough progress in reading.
- Teachers' marking does not help pupils consistently and fully to understand how to improve their work and act upon feedback.
- The role of teachers with specific responsibilities, such as subject leaders, is not yet fully developed.

### Information about this inspection

- The inspectors made 14 lesson observations, some of which were carried out jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors visited all classes to look at pupils' work in books and on display.
- Inspectors also looked at pupils' work jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, talked to groups of children and attended an assembly.
- A wide range of documents was considered, including those related to safety, topic and subject materials, monitoring files, policies, and the school's own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, as well as the school website.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders and those with whole-school subject responsibilities, teachers, parents, a representative of the local authority and seven governors.
- Inspectors took account of 67 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views of 15 parents who spoke to them in the playground. They also considered the 21 responses to the staff questionnaire.

### Inspection team

Gillian Bosschaert, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Margaret Eldridge-Mrotzek

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is an average-size primary school. It has a part-time Nursery and full-time Reception class.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, at 18%, is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, at around 12%, is well below average. Pupil premium funding provides additional money for pupils in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for progress and standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.

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

- Improve teaching across the school so that pupils make the best possible progress by:
  - developing marking to show pupils consistently how to improve their work; and making sure pupils learn from the advice given
  - setting more demanding work for disadvantaged pupils in reading and for the most able in all classes in reading and mathematics so that they make the best progress of which they are capable.
- Develop the skills of all leaders so that they can play an increasing role in accelerating improvements in their areas of responsibility.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has an ambitious vision for the school. She knows the pupils and their families well and is considered by them to be, 'one of the family.' She and the deputy headteacher, together with the governors, are a strong team.
- The management of the early years provision is outstanding and the staff provide excellent role models.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are rigorous and systematic in monitoring teaching and learning. They have ensured that teachers are clear about what makes effective teaching. As a result, teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- There are effective checks on the progress all pupils make through regular pupil progress meetings. As a result, pupils who are finding it difficult to keep up with the rest of the class are identified early, attention is drawn to their needs and additional help is given.
- The school makes good use of the pupil premium funding for one-to-one teaching or small group work. Pupils are identified on teachers' planning to ensure that their progress is regularly monitored and they keep up with their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well. Their progress is routinely monitored by the headteacher and other leaders to ensure that the support provided to them is effective.
- The staff team is very cohesive and all are keen to continue to build their skills. Targets set for improving both teachers' and teaching assistants' performance are closely linked to raising standards. Areas of relative weakness are being addressed, and the training provided links closely to the school's improvement priorities. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. The school plans well to ensure talent is nurtured and pupils receive good teaching. As a result, pupils' progress has accelerated in reading and spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Teachers have had training on the new curriculum and have adapted their planning accordingly. The teaching of subject content and skills is well organised so that they complement each other. For example, pupils develop their writing skills well in subjects such as religious education and history as well as in English lessons. The curriculum is imaginative and has captured the children's interests. Leaders continually evaluate it to ensure that it is well organised and effective in meeting the needs, skills and aptitudes of all the pupils.
- The curriculum is further enhanced by senior leaders' dedication to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education, which is a real strength of the school. Christian values are its core and British values strongly promoted. This is supported in a variety of ways, for example through music, educational visits to different places of worship and by giving pupils a voice through the school council. Well-planned assemblies each term focus on a specific value: currently this is 'Peace' and everyone including parents and governors are fully aware of this; inspectors attended an excellent assembly to commemorate Remembrance Day.
- The primary school sports funding is well used to ensure pupils can take part in a very wide variety of sporting activities. Teachers receive coaching alongside pupils. Activities include 'Physikids' Club for Key Stage 1 pupils to develop ball handling skills and increase dexterity.
- The school provides a very well run breakfast club. Pupils have a healthy start to the day with a cooked breakfast. All pupils are encouraged to brush their teeth and then have opportunities to run and play or stay in and play board games.

- Safeguarding and child protection arrangements meet all current requirements. Records are outstanding in their detail and thoroughness. All teaching and non-teaching staff receive regular and up-to-date training.
- The responses on the Parent View questionnaire and the views of parents spoken to in the playground were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They appreciate the headteacher's commitment to the school and its parents, staff and pupils. 'We are like one big family', one parent told an inspector.
- Self-evaluation is detailed, giving an accurate view of the school. School action plans are focused on the correct priorities and are supporting school improvement. However, the skills of subject leaders, some of whom are relatively new in post, are not yet sufficiently developed to enable them to play a part in driving improvements in their subjects.
- The school commissions effective support from the local authority and receives four visits a year to help set targets, monitor teaching and provide assistance to the governors to set targets for the headteacher's performance.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors bring a wide range of skills to the school including expertise in business, finance, law and personnel. Governors are very enthusiastic and keen to develop professionally, as shown by their good attendance for training.
  - Governors visit the school regularly and are closely involved with classes. Each governor is assigned to a teacher as well as a subject, which gives them the opportunity to not only see how pupils are taught but also to be aware of the impact of any funding which they have allocated. They understand the school's strengths and areas to improve and challenge leaders successfully as a result. They understand how school performance compares to similar schools nationally.
  - Governors manage the performance of the headteacher very effectively and meet regularly to review the progress made towards the school's goals. They ensure procedures for the performance management of staff are robust and that the performance of teachers is reflected in decisions about their pay progression.
  - Governors make sure that pupil premium and the sports grant are spent well and know the impact the funds are having. They ensure that child protection and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements, and that the school is a safe environment for pupils and staff.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils is outstanding**

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are highly motivated and settle to learning quickly. Behaviour in and around the school is exemplary. In lessons, pupils work with each other in pairs or groups and share equipment very well. They are proud of their school and talk enthusiastically about their achievements. Individuals explained that they 'love coming to school because lessons are fun and interesting' and they 'learn about lots of things'.
- The school promotes Christian values that are also common to all faiths. These are used to reinforce the exemplary behaviour and generate topics for religious education and prayer. For example, for 'Peace', this term's value, pupils spontaneously offered prayers in assembly.
- The school is a calm and orderly place and the pupils and staff enjoy being there. The parental questionnaire, Parent View, the staff questionnaire and the views of parents in the playground confirm this. Attendance is above average.
- Pupils display a great deal of consideration for each other and are very polite to adults and visitors. Eco-warriors, worship leaders and the school council meet regularly with a teacher to highlight any concerns and areas for improvement. Pupils see each other as members of a school family. They comfort each other if upset and can explain that 'it is alright to get things wrong' in the classroom. They are exceptionally accepting and supportive of each other and demonstrate a marked aversion to any kind of discrimination.

## Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Meticulous records are kept; all educational visits are well documented and assessed thoroughly for risk. Pupils understand keeping safe and explain its application in lessons, for example when carrying objects or needing to stretch in physical education or when using the computer and internet.
- Pupils confirm that they are happy and feel safe in school. They understand that there are many types of danger, from crossing the road to taking drugs. They are fully aware of risks such as bullying and cyber-bullying. One child stated that they do not have bullying in school, just disagreements, and explained the distinction between the two.

## The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils are well taught. Books show that teaching over time has been good, with pupils reaching above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1. This is especially the case in reading because of the good teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make).
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to capture pupils' interest well. Planning and preparation is a strength of teaching. Disadvantaged pupils are identified on teachers' lesson planning and their progress is carefully monitored. Pupils are clear about their tasks and engage quickly. They are highly motivated because teachers make learning fun; they want to please their teachers and so work hard.
- Teachers model good vocabulary, especially in mathematics. The extensive use of good questioning skills to develop pupils' thinking and deepen understanding has ensured that pupils enjoy opportunities to talk to a partner and relish the opportunities to talk to an adult, which makes a valuable contribution to their development. Most teaching assistants support pupils extremely well and help to promote good achievement. They know when to intervene and when to stand back.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is at the heart of everything that is taught in the school and is a particular strength. Pupils' artwork and other displays around the school show a wide variety of faiths and cultures are studied. Their understanding is enhanced by their links with schools in contrasting localities: regional, national and global. For example, links to the Gambia encourage pupils to understand similarities and differences between their lives and those of others.
- The most able pupils are not always given work which accelerates their learning; this hinders them from attaining the highest levels of attainment. The school is addressing this, for example with some small group extension work in Year 6, and indications are that more pupils will reach the higher levels this year.
- Literacy and numeracy are taught well in the vast majority of classes. With the development of the new curriculum, increasingly these are being taught across subjects.
- Marking is not yet consistent across the school. In the best examples marking is diagnostic and informs pupils how to improve their work or try something new. At the top of the school pupils have opportunities to mark their own and each other's work and respond to comments made by their teachers. However this is not the normal practice in every class.

## The achievement of pupils is good

- There has been a trend of rising attainment in English and mathematics in recent years. This trend continued in the 2014 end of year tests in writing, spelling, punctuation and grammar, but not in reading, which fell to below national averages or mathematics in which standards were broadly average. The school's current assessment data and inspection evidence suggest that pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to meet challenging targets and to continue the overall rising trend in attainment not only in reading, but also in writing and mathematics.

- Pupils' progress in writing is very strong, with a much higher proportion making better than expected progress than in schools nationally in 2014. While the great majority of pupils made the expected progress in reading and mathematics, a smaller proportion than nationally made more than the expected progress.
- Most pupils enjoy reading and read with the confidence and accuracy expected of their age. Younger pupils read unfamiliar words by applying their knowledge of phonics. Pupils talk excitedly about their books and declare their fondness for reading. However, reading is a particular focus for improvement, given the school's disappointment with the 2014 test results.
- The development of pupils' speaking and listening skills is also a focus for all teachers in the lower school, building on the good achievement in the early years. Pupils are able to explain well what they are doing and talk through questions using 'talk partners' to clarify thoughts.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs benefit from the good support provided by teachers and well-trained teaching assistants. Overall, they make good progress in mathematics and writing, but there is some variation between classes and their progress is slower than their peers nationally in reading.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils in a variety of ways. The implementation of speech and language programmes in the lower school, some one-to-one tuition as well as other intervention packages ensure that these pupils make good progress. Their attainment in reading is the same as similar pupils nationally, but is behind their classmates by nearly two terms; in writing it is better than pupils nationally and they are a term behind their classmates; and in mathematics it is below similar pupils nationally and a term and a half behind their classmates. This is an improvement on previous years showing that the gap is closing in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most able pupils make the progress expected of them, but not enough reach the highest levels of attainment at the end of Year 6 in reading and mathematics. Senior leaders are confident that targets will be reached because current data and inspection evidence shows they are on track to exceed the previous Year 6.

### **The early years provision is outstanding**

- The children start with skills that are typical for their age. Excellent teaching and care for their welfare make them feel secure so they make exceptional progress and enter Key Stage 1 at levels higher than expected for their age in all areas of learning.
- 'Talk time' is an integral part of each day, adults continually promote discussion throughout play activities and when focusing on a particular area of learning. For example, when setting up the shop in the Nursery, children are encouraged to find labels for 'open' and 'closed' and name the vegetables, constantly counting and recounting in sequence. Early writing is encouraged through imaginative activities.
- Good use is made of the accommodation inside and outside. Previous early years children made decisions about how their outside area should be landscaped. As a result the space is very child-friendly and promotes all areas of their learning very well, from the giant's footsteps to toadstool seating for stories. The slide and 'through the hill' tunnel and the 'mud kitchen' are stimulating and exciting areas to play.
- Leadership is very strong with key practitioners being: a specialist leader in early years education and a leading teacher for the early years. They demonstrate outstanding practice at all times and to a great number of teachers across the county.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	117407
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448503

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	236
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sheila Knowles
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rosemary Woodall
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 February 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01920 870097
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