

Ainsdale St John's Church of England Primary School

Sandbrook Road, Ainsdale, Southport, Merseyside, PR8 3JE

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Children quickly become enthusiastic learners in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they benefit from excellent teaching and an exciting and lively curriculum.
- The school builds extremely well on this excellent start and, as a result, pupils' overall achievement is outstanding. Pupils make excellent progress as they move up through the school and they achieve above average standards by the time they leave Year 6.
- Outstanding teaching makes certain that all pupils learn very well. Teachers and other adults have very high expectations of all learners. They know pupils exceptionally well and set challenging work which encourages pupils to reason and develop independent learning skills.
- Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs are extremely well provided for and are enabled to achieve well in this fully inclusive school.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are unfailingly polite and considerate of others in this happy school. Eager to learn, pupils relish challenge and show great initiative and self-motivation in their approach to learning.
- The headteacher's excellent leadership is strongly supported by the deputy headteacher, very knowledgeable and effective governors and by staff at every level in the school.
- The rich and vibrant curriculum is very well matched to pupils' needs and provides a wide range of learning opportunities and experiences.
- Where teaching is most effective, marking shows pupils clear next steps to improve their work and teachers provide time for them to act on this advice in lessons. Leaders have identified that this is not yet fully consistent across the school and work is underway to address this.
- Parents have great confidence in the school and its leaders and staff. They say that their children enjoy school, are safe and well-cared for.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 19 lessons or parts of lessons, of which four were joint observations with senior leaders. The inspectors also looked at examples of pupils' work, listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils and inspectors spoke to pupils about their work. Inspectors held meetings with four members of the governing body. They spoke to a representative of the local authority and met with members of the school staff.
- In the course of the inspection, the views of 22 parents who responded to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the start of the school day and took account of the school's own questionnaires to parents and the views of staff expressed in the questionnaire completed during the inspection.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including a summary of the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness, the school development plan and analysis of current data of pupils' attainment and progress. Minutes from governing body meetings were also considered.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Potter

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are well below national averages.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below the national average. An average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is below the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection the school has experienced significant changes to the school leadership team. Following the retirement of the previous post holder, a new headteacher was appointed in September 2012. A new deputy headteacher was also appointed at this time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching even further by ensuring that:
 - marking of pupils' work is as good as the best practice that exists in the school so that it consistently gives clear and specific guidance to pupils on how to improve their work
 - teachers regularly provide time in lessons for pupils to act on the advice provided in marking.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Most children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill levels broadly typical for their age. Teaching excites and captures pupils' interests well and they gain strong and extremely positive attitudes towards learning during their time in the Reception class. This high quality provision in all areas of learning prepares children very well for Year 1.
- Pupils make brisk progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout Key Stage 1 to reach standards that are above average overall by the end of Year 2. School data and pupils' work indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics is above that expected nationally.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils make rapid progress in English and mathematics. Current school data and pupils' work show that, from Year 2 to Year 6, the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress from their starting points is continuing to rise in reading, writing and mathematics and is high when compared to the national average.
- Published data in 2012 showed that pupils' overall standards were significantly above the national average by the end of Year 6. Current data compiled by leaders and evidence in pupils' work indicate that the number of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics has continued to improve and is higher than the national average. In particular, the quality of writing for pupils working at the higher levels, including some at Level 6, is impressive.
- As a result of a well-adapted curriculum and well-targeted support which meets their needs extremely well, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress from their starting points.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively. The standards reached by pupils who receive this funding is at least in line with, and for some pupils higher than, national averages for similar pupils and compares well with other pupils in the school. The school suitably promotes equality of opportunity. The provision of small groups and one-to-one teaching to accelerate pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is proving effective.
- Early reading skills are taught very effectively. In 2012, a broadly average proportion of pupils met the standard for the reading check in Year 1. Senior leaders' focus on improving reading skills further has been successful and current pupils are doing better than this. Pupils' thirst for knowledge is reflected in their love for reading. They enjoy using books and the internet to find things out for topic work as well as reading stories for pleasure.
- Lesson observations, hearing pupils read and scrutiny of work confirm that current pupils are making consistently very good progress.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- The quality of teaching over time is outstanding and has resulted in fast progress and high standards. Teaching in more than half the lessons observed was of the highest quality and the vast majority had outstanding elements. Pupils' work shows that learning over time is robust throughout the school and across all subjects. All classrooms have a learning 'buzz'. Pupils are eager to learn and work at a brisk pace.
- High quality teaching provides pupils with many opportunities to become actively involved in lessons. Work is set at precisely the level necessary to challenge pupils' thinking. Regular opportunities are provided to enable pupils to apply reasoning skills and develop as independent learners. For example, in a Year 5 lesson pupils became 'Maths Detectives' to solve a range of problems using inverse operations.
- Lessons are very well planned. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to explain new learning well and extend pupils' understanding very effectively. Well-developed questioning skills are used by teachers and assistants to help overcome any misconception that arise in lessons.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively together to support learning. All adults in

the school know pupils extremely well. The positive relationships which exist in classrooms and around the school help develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem well.

- Pupils say they enjoy school. Exciting lessons which motivate and engage pupils in learning contribute to their excellent achievement. In a lesson in Year 3, for example, pupils very effectively, and with great fun, developed their use of similes by making comparisons between different kinds of chocolate.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly with the majority of written comments using praise to encourage. However, teachers do not always provide pupils with clear written comments on what they need to do to improve and those that do provide these helpful 'next steps' do not always provide enough time for pupils to act on the advice given. This means chances are sometimes missed to move learning forward even further.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils develop a maturity beyond their years. They are extremely well-behaved in lessons and around school and are very polite and well-mannered towards each other and to adults and visitors.
- Pupils are aware of the different forms of bullying and report that incidents are rare. If bullying or minor disputes do occur pupils trust the adults to sort things out quickly and fairly.
- Extremely positive attitudes to learning are evident throughout all year groups. Pupils treat each other with great respect and instances of pupils becoming distracted or distracting others are rare. This exemplary behaviour was typified in a Year 5 music lesson where the teacher was using West African djembe drums to build on work in a previous session. Pupils listened attentively to the teacher and each other. They took turns exploring the rhythm, pitch and tempo of these instruments, recognising and celebrating the achievement and creativity of fellow pupils throughout the lesson.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school because adults look after them very well. They learn about keeping safe in lessons and take a proactive approach in helping care for each other. Pupils who are members of the 'Make Our School Safe' group, for example, lead assemblies about cycling safety and encourage other children to wear their helmets when they ride their bike to school.
- The responses to Parent View and to the parental survey carried out by the school indicate that all parents agree that their children are very safe at school and are exceptionally well-cared for.
- Attendance has a high profile and is above the national average.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- A warm, caring and welcoming ethos exists where adults ensure that pupils are known as individuals and are treated equally. The school is highly valued by parents. All those consulted agree the school is well led and managed and would recommend it to other parents.
- Strong leadership is provided by the headteacher who is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are highly ambitious for the school and have the full support of highly committed governors and staff. Leadership is successfully shared across many levels and all staff work effectively and enthusiastically together to secure continuous improvement. This has ensured that Ainsdale St John's remains an outstanding school delivering an excellent standard of education for all its pupils.
- Subject leaders and other managers have a clear focus on ensuring all pupils make rapid progress throughout the school. The school's systems for checking pupils' progress are highly effective. Pupils who may be at risk of falling behind in their learning are quickly identified and high quality additional support is provided. This shows the school's commitment to offering equality of opportunity for learning and success for all its pupils.

- Systems and procedures used to check the quality of teaching provide accurate and regular feedback to leaders on teachers' performance. This information is used very effectively to identify and share the best practice that exists in the school and to ensure that teaching continues to improve. Clear links exist between the achievement of pupils and teachers' pay awards.
- Throughout the school teachers make learning exciting and memorable through a well-planned curriculum which brings subjects together creatively into topics that engage pupils' interests well. Frequent opportunities are provided to enable pupils to practise and develop literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects which contribute well to their excellent achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum offers many opportunities to learn beyond the classroom through visits and residential trips. Other enrichment experiences are provided through a range of popular after-school clubs which include participation in sport or in creative activities such as the 'Knit Wits' club.
- Excellent provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the curriculum and the strong links that exist with the church and the local community.
- The local authority provides 'light touch' support for this outstanding school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The highly effective and supportive governing body knows the school extremely well. Systems to gain first-hand experience of the work of the school contribute well to the governors' very accurate view of the school's performance. Members of the governing body ensure that their skills are well directed to provide senior leaders with excellent levels of support and robust challenge. Governors have a clear understanding of the connection between the quality of work that staff do and the arrangements for pay progression. The governing body is diligent when checking on school financial matters and is clear about the use of pupil premium funding to provide additional support for pupils known to be eligible for this funding. Safeguarding policies and procedures meet the statutory requirements.

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

Unique reference number	104903
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	412435

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Wake
Headteacher	Paul Hooton
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2007
Telephone number	01704 578427
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