

St Anselm's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118765
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358440
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Richard Potts

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Santer
Headteacher	Catherine Ward
Date of previous school inspection	11 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 18 lessons taught by eight teachers, looked at pupils' books, held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils and spoke to some parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation, including improvement plans, safeguarding policies and procedures, school data about pupils' progress, monitoring reports and curriculum plans. In addition, inspectors considered 74 parents' and carers' questionnaires as well as questionnaires from 17 staff and 103 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The extent to which assessment information is used effectively to match the degree of challenge of work to pupils' learning needs.
- The extent to which pupils make progress in English and in particular, in their writing.
- The appropriateness of the curriculum in engaging and motivating all groups of pupils, particularly those for whom English is an additional language.

Information about the school

St Anselm's Catholic Primary School is an average-sized primary school with an Early Years Foundation Stage for reception-age children. It is a popular school with many more applications for places than it can accommodate. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is under half the national average, although this is rising as population patterns change. Around 40% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language has risen sharply over the last two years. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.

The school benefits from a close association with the nearby Cabrini Children's Society Centre, which provides a range of services including a breakfast club, after-school club and holiday activities for children. The governing body is not responsible for the management of this facility.

In the last two years, the headteacher has overseen a number of new appointments. A quarter of the teaching staff, including a member of the senior leadership team, have recently been appointed to the school.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Some aspects of its work, including the effectiveness of care, guidance and support and the way the school tackles discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity, are outstanding. The school's procedures to evaluate its effectiveness are thorough and accurately pinpoint its strengths and areas for development. In the last two years, school leaders and the governing body have rightly focused on improving pupils' attainment, particularly in English. The school's own data confirm rising attainment across the school and acceleration in the rate at which pupils learn. This success underlines the school's good capacity to sustain improvement.

Despite the steep rise in the number of pupils for whom English is an additional language in recent years, the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 4 in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has remained above average, while the number attaining the higher levels has increased. All pupils make good progress from the point at which they join the school, because teachers have high expectations of them and ensure that the work is carefully matched to their learning needs. The quality of teaching is good overall and some of it is exemplary, but there is some variation between year groups. This is because teachers do not always use routine assessment, such as marking, consistently well to engage pupils in their own learning, as in some lessons pupils are unsure about their next steps and how to achieve them.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have a clear set of personal values and a keen interest in others and the world around them. They reflect on their experiences and value the beliefs and opinions of others. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the local community and many are engaged in its improvement. Attendance is above average and most pupils feel safe because of the excellent attention given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. Behaviour is good throughout the school and there is a purposeful learning atmosphere in all classes.

Pupils enjoy coming to this exceptionally caring school and very well-targeted support for each individual enables them to make the best of the opportunities provided. A very large majority of parents and carers recognise and value its work. One said, 'The school has put extra support in place to help my child's special needs in the areas that would help her socially, emotionally and academically, and I am very pleased.' Nevertheless, during the inspection, a small minority of parents felt that the school did not always respond to their concerns and suggestions and they did not always feel well placed to support its work in promoting the learning, development and well-being of their children.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve rates of progress for all pupils by:

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- increasing pupils' involvement in their own learning by ensuring that they know their next steps and how to achieve them
- increasing the engagement of parents and carers in the work of the school so that they can better support the learning, development and well-being of their children.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The work seen in lessons and in pupils' books confirms that attainment is above average by the time pupils reach Year 6 and there is no variation in the attainment of different groups. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are making good progress, particularly in English, where their language skills are well developed through a determined focus on speaking and listening and the rigorous teaching of phonics. The school has introduced improved systems for tracking pupils' learning and these indicate acceleration in the rate at which pupils make progress. Overall, pupils achieve well, develop good literacy and numeracy skills and are well prepared for the next stage of their education and later life.

Pupils behave well. They are motivated and try hard in most lessons, because of the interesting activities that teachers prepare for them. For example, in a lesson based on the topical and devastating effects of the Japanese tsunami, pupils carefully researched its location to predict possible consequences for neighbouring areas and suggested what might be done to avoid future destruction.

Highly positive, respectful and caring relationships between staff and pupils result in above-average attendance and a readiness to learn. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. They are tolerant, with a good understanding of others' views and a concern for the individual, and they value the enrichment that those from different cultures bring to the school. The school council is involved in many aspects of the school's work and is particularly proud of its plans to improve the playground facilities.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the local community and many are extensively involved in charitable work. They have worked with the local authority to combat the presence of litter and graffiti and other anti-social behaviour in the area. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and of the importance of being healthy.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good because teachers have high expectations of pupils. Teachers use detailed and accurate assessment information to ensure that the work they set for each individual is well matched to their learning needs. Teaching assistants are appropriately deployed to support pupils' learning and well-being and make a valuable contribution to their progress. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to enrich learning. Marking effectively identifies pupils' misunderstanding in aspects of their learning and mistakes are identified and rectified, but pupils are not always clear about the next steps in their learning and what they need to do to achieve them.

The good quality curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched by a wide range of additional activities. Pupils enjoy a wide variety of extra-curricular provision, for which there is a high degree of take-up.

St Anselm's Roman Catholic Primary School is a deeply caring school which has developed extremely strong and effective pastoral support for all its pupils. Provision to help those new to the school community enables them to settle quickly because of the high quality guidance and support they receive.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Accurate self-evaluation underpins a realistic understanding of the priorities facing the school. Improvement plans are logical and comprehensive, with success criteria that are sharply focused on better outcomes for pupils and which underpin the school's good capacity to improve. Under the skilled direction of the headteacher, the leadership team shares a vision of ambitious improvement and a determination to translate it into reality.

The governing body has a thorough understanding of the challenges the school faces and of its role in holding it to account. Governors have made good arrangements to ensure the safety and welfare of staff and pupils, and demonstrate commitment and dedication in challenging and supporting the school to make appropriate improvements. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding arrangements were found to be good, with the rigorous application of well-considered systems and procedures and suitable arrangements for site security.

The school is mindful of the different cultural and ethnic groups it serves. Excellent procedures ensure that there is no discrimination or inequality. The school works effectively to ensure cohesion within the community it serves and within the broader Catholic community, both nationally and internationally.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children join the school working at levels below those expected for their age group. They work together sensibly and happily and are good at taking the initiative in their learning. The high quality outdoor environment is used very effectively to stimulate children's imaginations and to enrich their learning experiences. For example, the children showed great interest and enthusiasm in searching for and gathering the 'turtles' eggs' that had been secreted in the sand. Their experience stimulated lively debate about the dangers that tourism presented to wildlife and prompted the children to practise their emergent writing skills.

By the time they leave the Reception Year, most children have made good progress in all aspects of their work and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language, receive well-targeted support so that they progress as well as their peers.

High quality teaching underpins good progress. Children have many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and they learn to spell through the systematic teaching of phonics. A broad curriculum provides a good balance between teacher-led activities and the opportunities provided for children to be creative and independent in their learning. Links between home and school are strong.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Adults are deeply committed to the care of the children and ensure that they are able to learn in a safe and healthy environment. Through effective self-evaluation, leaders have a thorough understanding of the setting's strengths and development areas and have ambitious plans for its continuing improvement.

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

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

Most parents and carers are very pleased with every aspect of their children's experience at the school, although a small minority were concerned that incidents of unacceptable behaviour were not dealt with effectively. By visiting classrooms, joining pupils during break times and observing how they related to each other, the inspection team found that pupils' behaviour was good and that positive and mutually respectful relationships characterised the school.

A similar number of parents and carers expressed the view that the school did not always respond to their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that there were appropriate channels of communication between home and school and that the school's engagement with parents and carers was good overall. Nevertheless, the school acknowledges the need to maintain vigilance in communicating with all parents and carers, particularly those whose commitments prevent them from visiting the school during working hours, and will review its procedures in the light of these comments.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Anselm's Roman Catholic Primary School 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 222 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	33	45	37	50	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	47	30	41	6	8	2	3
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	42	35	47	8	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	39	39	53	5	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	45	30	41	7	9	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	36	35	47	9	12	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	24	45	61	8	11	2	3
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)	18	24	44	59	3	4	4	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	36	36	49	5	7	3	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	35	34	46	10	14	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	28	34	46	14	19	4	5
The school is led and managed effectively	30	41	29	39	9	12	4	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	42	32	43	7	9	1	1

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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



15 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anselm's Roman Catholic Primary School, Dartford DA1 5EA

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly during our visit. We can understand why you enjoy coming to school, because it is a safe, welcoming and caring place where you are well looked after. We found that your school gives you a good education. Here are some of the best things about your school.

- You all learn a lot in lessons and make good progress in your work.
- The adults are kind and caring and plan interesting things for you to do.
- You work really well together to make your school and its community a better place.
- The school is careful to keep you safe and healthy.

These are the things we have asked your school to do next. We would like your teachers to:

- help you to be smarter learners so you can help yourself to improve your work, by being clearer about the next steps you need to take in your learning and how to achieve them
- work more closely with your parents and carers, so that they can also help you to learn better.

Thank you again for talking to us about your school and for showing us your work. You can help your teachers by making sure you always listen carefully to their advice.

Yours sincerely

Richard Potts

Lead inspector

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