

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110003
Local Authority	Reading
Inspection number	378030
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Sonja Joseph

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tess Taylor
Headteacher	Kait Feeney Nash
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by seven teachers. Inspectors held meetings with staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, a local authority officer and groups of pupils and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. Questionnaires from 37 parents and carers and 100 pupils were analysed.

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

- Does the quality of teaching and assessment across the school have a sufficient impact on the amount of progress pupils make in writing and mathematics?
- How effectively are leaders at all levels, including the governing body, evaluating school performance and helping push forward sustainable improvements?
- To what extent are pupils encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning in lessons?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average and a majority are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The Early Years Foundation stage consists of a class of Reception-age children. The school has gained several awards including those for Healthy Schools status and Activemark.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Anne's is a satisfactory school. Its strengths lie primarily in its caring ethos and particularly its support for pupils who may be vulnerable owing to their circumstances. Behaviour is consistently good. Pupils are thoughtful, mature, polite and respectful, and show good attitudes to learning. They have a good understanding of how to maintain a healthy lifestyle and understand the difference between right and wrong. This is reflected in their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe there, which, when combined with the school's effective strategies to promote regular attendance, is reflected in attendance rates that are above average. The school has the support of parents and carers with most saying that overall they are happy with their children's experience at the school. One parental view, typical of many, was that, 'St Anne's has been a brilliant start for both my children.'

Achievement is satisfactory. Children start school with skills that are generally in line with typical expectations for their age and, by the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, most attain broadly average standards. This demonstrates satisfactory progress from their starting points. Over the last three years, progress has been better across Key Stage 2 than across Key Stage 1. However, evidence from lesson observations, the school's tracking information and scrutiny of books indicates that progress is now improving for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Appropriate support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures they make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

The quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the curriculum are both satisfactory. The school is currently working to improve this. In the best lessons, there is a sense of pace and purpose. However, on occasions in lessons, teachers talk for too long so that pupils are not actively engaged and, as a result, the pace of learning slows. Pupils are not always given frequent enough opportunities to practise their speaking, listening and writing skills. This means that their range of vocabulary and ability to sequence thoughts and ideas are often underdeveloped. Similarly, pupils are not able to practise applying their calculation and other mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum. When combined together, these factors cause inconsistencies in pupils' progress in writing and mathematics.

Systems for self-evaluation provide the school with a broadly accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses, and managers' ability to identify priorities for improvement has led to some success. For example, engagement with the local

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authority through a bespoke programme of support has led to some improvements in the use of assessment and has raised expectations regarding the quality of teaching. However, many of the new systems have yet to become fully embedded and so inconsistencies remain in the rate of pupils' progress across the school. At present, middle leaders' involvement in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is too limited. The headteacher and the governing body acknowledge that this is an area for improvement, as is the development of more rigorous systems for the involvement of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the school's work. All of the above coupled with the average levels of pupil attainment over recent years means that the school has a satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and continue to accelerate their progress across the school by:
 - ensuring all teachers use their knowledge of where pupils are at in their learning to plan and deliver activities that are closely matched to their individual learning needs
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking, listening, writing and calculation skills in subjects and topics across the curriculum.
- Increase substantially the proportion of good or better teaching by:
 - making sure that all lessons proceed with good pace
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to learn actively and independently
 - demonstrating to pupils how their skills, knowledge and understanding can be combined into a successful piece of work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels by:
 - increasing the effective involvement of middle leaders in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning
 - ensuring that the governing body contributes more effectively to monitoring and evaluating the school's work
 - ensuring school tracking systems allow a more focused and thorough analysis of pupils' progress, overall and across key stages.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Most pupils enjoy learning and genuinely want to please their teachers. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons, especially when given practical activities that challenge them to think and work out problems. Pupils also enjoy working collaboratively with a partner or in a group. In lessons observed during the inspection, pupils were

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attentive and engaged when lessons allowed them to be actively involved, but less so when the lesson was too teacher dominated.

Data indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in the Year 6 national assessments has recently dropped slightly in both English and mathematics. Although there is some evidence that the most-able pupils are beginning to make faster progress, lesson planning generally lacks a clear focus on challenging such pupils. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because of good resources, an awareness of their individual needs and a good programme of language support.

Pupils behave well, responding positively to rules, rewards and sanctions that they see as being fair and helpful. They know that their views are respected and their efforts valued and that they make a smooth contribution to the running of the school. One pupil, while talking about the jobs pupils do, said 'What we say makes a difference here and we get to make decisions.' Members of the school council have played significant roles in the improvement of facilities on the playground. House captains and playground buddies support their peers well in engaging in playground activities and games. Large numbers of pupils participate in the very good range of sporting and musical activities after school that benefit their health and well-being. Pupils have a good understanding of moral values and are ready to share their feelings with each other. Their spiritual, moral, and social development is good, and their understanding of the values, traditions and beliefs of other cultures is satisfactory and improving. Pupils' sound basic skills, together with above average attendance, ensure that they are prepared satisfactorily for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

In the better lessons, good planning ensures that varied activities are provided that meet the needs of pupils, and good pace and challenge from the teacher stimulates their interest. Pupils are encouraged to be active and they are supported to make maximum progress when working independently. This was evident in a mathematics lesson where pupils were supported to compile a checklist for success when completing their work. This effective practice of demonstrating to pupils how their skills, knowledge and understanding should be included in their work is not yet used consistently in all classes.

In less successful lessons, assessment information is not used sufficiently well to tailor activities to the specific needs of individual pupils. Pupils do not always understand what is expected of them. On occasion teachers spend too long explaining so that pupils listen passively, rather than being actively involved in their learning, resulting in a slowing of progress and loss of interest among some pupils. Teaching assistants provide valuable support to pupils identified as needing extra help. However, occasionally, that support results in staff doing much of the work for the pupils rather than guiding pupils along the steps to success.

The curriculum is planned appropriately with a strong focus upon skills development in literacy and numeracy. However, pupils are not always given enough opportunities to practise these key skills across a range of subjects. Considerable work has been undertaken to improve the provision for mathematics and writing in response to identified needs and the impact on outcomes is beginning to be seen. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities which focus particularly on sports and the arts.

Good care, guidance and support ensure that every pupil is known and valued as an individual. This is particularly so for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. There is close partnership working with a range of external agencies. These effective relationships are having a positive impact on the personal development and well-being of pupils and the support and advice provided for their families. Arrangements for pupils joining the school in the Reception class are effective in enabling them to settle to school routines and are appreciated by parents and carers. Similarly, arrangements for pupils at the end of Year 6 ensure a smooth move for transition to secondary school. Well-coordinated systems make a positive contribution to above average rates of attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders, at all levels, fulfil their roles satisfactorily. They are working securely to drive ambition and achieve improvement. Leaders are aware of the need to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment by the end of Year 6. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily. However, secure, sustained improvement for all different groups of pupils has yet to be achieved. The current tracking system does not provide a clear enough picture of the progress made by groups and individuals, overall and by key stage, especially for those that may be at risk of underachievement. This, in turn, limits the potential to tailor provision to meet the specific needs of individuals. A good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses has led to the correct areas for improvement being identified, although development planning is not always focused sharply enough on the impact of actions undertaken.

Members of the governing body are well organised and led by a knowledgeable chair person and are very supportive of the school aims. They regularly check on the progress of improvements identified in the school development plan. The governing body have restructured its committee's, in order to hold the school to account for weaknesses, particularly through the standards committee. However, governors are not sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision. Safeguarding procedures have recently been reviewed and are satisfactory. Good procedures are securely in place to safeguard those most at risk.

Partnerships beyond school, such as with the local authority and with other schools, are also helping to secure improvement, particularly by providing professional development opportunities for staff. The school engages parents and carers in the life of the school effectively. School events are well attended and parental questionnaires indicated how much they appreciate the school's electronic messaging system to keep them informed and up-to-date with school news.

The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Pupils' involvement in local and parish events enhances the harmonious nature of the school. However, their knowledge and understanding of the variety of faiths and cultures within the United Kingdom and the world are less well developed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

From starting points that are broadly in line with typical expectations, children make satisfactory progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children settle well into school life. Warm and caring relationships between adults and children, together with the welcoming learning environment, ensure that they feel happy and safe. Adults encourage children to get on well together, to take turns and share. They also support children to behave well and to develop their confidence and independence. Opportunities for learning are satisfactory and improving. Staff have benefited from the substantial training they have received from the local authority and their expertise is developing well. Sometimes, learning opportunities are missed when activities are too adult directed and there is more focus on the activity rather than the learning. Improvements to the indoor and outdoor provision enable children to have free access to a range of activities that promote their physical development well. Outdoor areas are spacious and generally, staff provide suitable activities to promote learning in these outside spaces. However, such activities do not always suitably promote learning across all aspects of the curriculum. Assessments are used appropriately to ensure that the planned activities provide sufficient challenge for children. Nevertheless, some opportunities are missed to enhance learning because adults' questioning does not always encourage children to extend their expressive language.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and the new leadership team is using information about children's progress to ensure that provision is adapted and improved where necessary. Good relationships have been fostered with parents and carers, who say that they feel welcome in the setting. However, there is potential to involve them more fully in their children's learning. The ongoing improvements in provision reflect the ambition, drive and increasing confidence of leaders and managers.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Although a below-average proportion of questionnaires were returned, the great majority of parents and carers express their overwhelming support for all aspects of the school's work. Most are strongly of the opinion that the school keeps their children safe and healthy and that they enjoy school. A small number of individual parents and carers expressed concern about specific aspects of the school's work. There was no discernable pattern to these concerns, which were investigated throughout the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Anne’s 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 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 200 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	62	10	27	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	68	11	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	37	49	18	49	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	41	17	46	4	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	46	17	40	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	37	51	11	30	4	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	49	17	46	1	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)	37	49	14	38	2	5	0	
The school meets my child’s particular needs	37	38	16	43	6	16	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	35	18	49	3	8	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	32	19	51	4	11	0	
The school is led and managed effectively	37	41	15	41	6	16	0	
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	37	43	19	51	1	3	0	

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



14 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Reading RG4 5AA

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and particularly appreciate the helpfulness of those pupils who spoke to us, shared their work and explained what they were doing during lessons. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. This means that there are some things that your school does well and some things it needs to improve.

We found that your school has some important strengths. Your behaviour is good and you enjoy coming to school. It is good to know that you are very happy with the way adults look after you and that you feel so safe in school. You have a good knowledge of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and enjoy having lots of responsibilities, such as membership of the school council. You work hard in lessons and reach average standards by the time you leave school. All the adults who work with you are determined to make sure your school keeps getting better.

To ensure that your progress and attainment continue to improve, I have asked the headteacher and governors to do the following things:

- Ensure that staff give you exactly the right kind of work and let you know exactly how you are doing so that you can make better progress.
- Give you lots of opportunities to join in during lessons and practise your speaking, reading, writing and mathematics skills in all of your other subjects.
- Make sure that all leaders think carefully about how they want the school to improve so that you it helps you to make faster progress.

I hope all of you continue to work hard and enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Sonja Joseph
Lead Inspector

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