

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104477
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	377089
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Joanne Olsson HMI

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	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Marsh
Headteacher	Maggie Keating
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Twelve lessons led by eight teachers were observed. Inspectors also made several visits to the Early Years Foundation Stage and observed pupils at play. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, senior leaders and managers and a local authority officer. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including arrangements for safeguarding, information about pupils' attainment and progress, and pupils' books. They considered the responses to questionnaires from staff, pupils and 124 parents and carers.

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

- How effectively the school is narrowing the achievement gap between different groups of pupils, particularly pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, pupils eligible for free school meals, boys and the more-able pupils.
- Whether teaching is consistently strong enough to enable all groups of pupils to make at least good and often exceptional progress from their starting points.
- The impact of all leaders and managers, including governors, on sustaining improvements to teaching and pupil progress.
- How effectively the school has addressed the issues from the previous inspection to ensure good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized primary school. Pupil numbers have risen in recent years due to school reorganisation in the local area. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average, as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is well above the national picture. The school has received a number of awards including Healthy School status, Activemark, Artsmark Gold, Basic Skills Award, International School Award, ICT Development Mark and Eco-School Award. Provision for 32 part-time nursery places is about to be introduced.

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

St Anne's is a good school. Senior leaders and managers, in partnership with the strong governing body, have effectively steered the school through a period of considerable change. As a consequence, the school merger has been successfully accomplished; previous good performance has been consolidated and the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved. The success of this welcoming and cohesive school lies in warm relationships, a strong focus on pupils' personal development and outstanding partnerships to support pupils' academic success and well-being. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their consistently high attendance. The positive views of most pupils are summed up in the comment: 'Everyday you feel welcome and safe.'

Children enter Reception with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress across the school and leave Year 6 with attainment levels above the national average. Pupils' achievement in English is stronger than in mathematics because they have good opportunities to practise writing skills in a variety of contexts. Pupils who are eligible for free school meals, boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not attain as highly as other groups of pupils. However, well targeted intervention strategies and effective classroom support mean these groups are making better than expected progress. As a result, gaps in achievement, particularly in English, are being narrowed. Pupils' thoughtful and considerate behaviour makes a significant contribution to their learning. They listen attentively and show respect to adults and to other pupils in classrooms and around the school. Pupils are proud of their school and they make an outstanding contribution to their school community.

Teaching is good overall. Most teachers plan lively and imaginative lessons which capture pupils' interest and make learning fun. While day-to-day assessment is used to re-shape tasks and explanations, assessment information is not used with enough precision to fully meet the needs of all of the more-able pupils. Teachers' marking of pupils' written work has improved since the previous inspection, but the guidance pupils receive on how to improve their work further in other subjects, particularly mathematics, is less well developed.

Leaders and managers have driven forward improvements during a turbulent period of school reorganisation and staffing instability. As a result, provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and gaps between different groups are narrowing.

The systems for checking the work of the school are thorough. However, the findings from all of the monitoring activities are not used sharply enough to address remaining inconsistencies. Nonetheless, the school's successful track record plus a common sense of purpose among the school community mean the capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so all consistently matches the best in the school by:
 - ensuring assessment information is used more precisely to meet the needs of the more-able pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems in a range of contexts
 - ensuring pupils receive greater information on how to improve their work in mathematics.

- Increase the effectiveness of the monitoring systems by:
 - providing new leaders and managers with greater opportunities to be involved in monitoring activities
 - using the findings from all of the activities to address remaining inconsistencies and identify school priorities more precisely
 - ensuring all quality assurance checks are fully in place.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their learning and are keen to participate in lessons. In a Year 4 English lesson, pupils worked exceptionally well together to translate a piece of text into a live performance. They showed respect as they listened attentively to each performance and offered positive feedback. In a Year 5 science lesson, pupils enthusiastically planned an investigation to find out how exercise impacts on their pulse rate. They relished the opportunity to link their science knowledge to everyday life and enjoyed sharing their examples. Activities such as these enable pupils to become confident and articulate learners who are willing to work hard and tackle challenges.

Pupils' academic achievement is good. Although attainment levels for Year 2 and Year 6 fell in 2010 to match the national average, pupils made good progress from their lower starting points. Pupils' achievement in English, particularly writing, is stronger than in mathematics. This is because pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to use their mathematical skills to solve problems in a range of contexts. Work in lessons, in books and the school's own assessment information show most pupils make good progress and attainment levels are improving. The achievement gaps between the majority of pupils and groups such as boys, pupils eligible for free school meals and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are narrowing as these groups are making better than expected progress. The achievement of more-able pupils is also stronger than at the previous inspection.

Nonetheless, this group do not make consistently good progress across the school because activities are not always precisely matched to their needs. Different groups of pupils say they feel safe and are confident any issues they raise are dealt with effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe: for example, they know the strategies they need to use to keep safe when using personal computers at home and at school. Pupils know the dangers of smoking, drug and alcohol misuse. They understand the need to exercise and eat a balanced diet to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are keen to accept positions of responsibility within school. They show their interest in their community by taking part in projects such as 'Ten Acres Pit' to reclaim waste ground. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because they have a keen sense of right and wrong and are able to reflect on their own experiences and those of others. For example, a small group of boys were able to thoughtfully consider their precious families and discuss what they could do to help them. Pupils' well-developed personal qualities, in addition to secure basic skills, mean they are well prepared for the future.

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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Positive relationships mean pupils are confident in sharing their ideas and willing to work hard. Lessons are interesting because teachers use resources effectively and often link learning to everyday life. Teachers' planning, including the deployment of teaching assistants, is most effective in meeting the needs of average ability pupils and those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Activities for the more-able pupils do not always take full account of assessment information to precisely match their needs. In the most effective lessons, teachers ask challenging questions that probe pupils' understanding. A variety of teaching styles are used to maintain pupils' interest and effectively build on prior learning. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work and celebrate their efforts. In writing books, most teachers provide clear feedback to pupils about what they need to do to further improve. However, this practice is not consistent across other subjects, particularly mathematics.

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

Good developments in the curriculum to link subjects together have led to more relevant and enjoyable activities for pupils. Regular 'Wow Days' give pupils the opportunity to write for a purpose. This has had a positive impact on the quality and quantity of writing produced by pupils. In contrast, the mathematics curriculum is less well developed. There is an over-reliance on published schemes and worksheets which limit pupils' opportunity to use their mathematical skills to solve problems in different contexts. A good range of extra-curricular clubs are well attended and appreciated by pupils.

'All staff are really nice people; they are kind and keep us safe.' This comment is typical of most pupils who agree adults in the school care for them. Pupils who entered the school as part of the reorganisation speak positively about the welcome they received and how quickly they settled into their new school. Secure systems are in place to support individuals and groups of pupils in their learning and personal development. There are effective procedures for promoting good attendance and monitoring absence. As a consequence, attendance rates have swiftly recovered from a slight dip and remain high.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Determined leadership has enabled the school to emerge successfully from a turbulent period without adversely affecting pupils' learning and well-being. Although some leaders are relatively new to their roles and have not been fully involved in monitoring activities, they have quickly become part of an effective team. They share the headteacher's drive and commitment to improving the school further. The systems for monitoring the work of the school are appropriate and have led to improvements in the quality of teaching. However, the findings from these activities are not always used with enough precision to address remaining inconsistencies. Members of the governing body make a strong contribution to school life. They have effectively steered the recent school merger through well-founded planning and regular communication with stakeholders. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses because they meet regularly with key leaders and provide a good level of challenge.

Positive relationships with parents and carers are fostered through paper and electronic communication. The establishment of the well attended Breakfast Club is one example of how the school has responded to the views of parents and carers. Although parents and carers receive regular information about their child's learning, the curriculum newsletter is shared with parents and carers of older pupils on a termly, rather than half-termly basis, which is common lower down in the school. The school's use of partnerships to support pupils' learning and well-being is

exceptional. Partners are used to enhance almost every aspect of school life, for example, the curriculum has been improved through national partnerships, while links with local schools have strengthened the school’s ability to support speech and language development. Thorough systems to monitor the academic achievement of all pupils are effective in ensuring equality of opportunity. As a consequence, the attainment gap between groups of pupils is narrowing. All forms of discrimination are tackled appropriately and the school is a cohesive community. The school’s strong links with the local community plus developing relationships with a school in the United Kingdom and a South American school are having a satisfactory impact in promoting community cohesion. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements, but sometimes the quality assurance of these procedures lacks rigour.

These are the grades for the 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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the Early Years Foundation Stage what they know and what they can do is in line with expectations for their age. Most children make good progress from this starting point and a growing number enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are above average. Children are curious and imaginative and thoroughly enjoy their learning. This was evident as a small group decided to put on a performance and then began making tickets which they planned to sell. They worked very well as a team, organising the resources they needed and listening to each other. They showed good levels of concentration and were willing to remain at this task until it was complete. Children are confident, articulate and exceptionally well mannered. They are proud of their learning environment. One group of children decided to clean the chalk marks from the ground to keep the playground tidy. These strong social skills plus their thoughtful behaviour make a significant contribution to their learning.

Good quality teaching, stimulating learning opportunities and a purposeful environment enable children to make good progress across all areas of learning. Planning is well informed by on-going accurate assessment. As a result, activities are imaginative, exciting and well-matched to the needs of the children. Adults support learning well. Their intervention is timely, although they sometimes over-use closed questions. The purpose-built outdoor environment fully reflects all of the areas of

learning. Consequently, children’s learning is equally strong whether they choose to remain indoors or play outside.

Effective leadership and management have transformed this area of the school. As a result, the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and work as a cohesive team to support children’s learning. Development planning is focused on appropriate priorities and a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses. The opportunity for parents and carers to meet with staff early in the term is fostering strong home and school partnerships.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The return rate for parent and carer questionnaires was higher than is usual in primary schools. Most of the parents and carers who returned the questionnaires were positive about all aspects of the school. Almost all considered their children enjoy school and are kept safe. The overwhelming majority agreed the school was well led and managed and teaching is good. A few were not so content with the manner in which unacceptable behaviour is dealt with or the school’s response to suggestions and concerns. A small minority also disagreed that the school keeps them informed about their child’s progress. Inspectors looked at these concerns carefully and the findings are included within this report.

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 124 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 255 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	91	73	29	23	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	98	79	25	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	68	55	47	38	4	3	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	68	55	50	40	3	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	82	66	39	31	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	77	62	43	35	2	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	76	61	45	36	2	2	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)	66	53	47	38	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	73	59	45	36	5	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	67	54	47	38	6	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	53	43	56	45	8	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	77	62	44	35	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	82	66	36	29	4	3	0	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 is 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.



16 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Liverpool, L36 5XL

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we recently came to inspect your school. All of the team found it a pleasure to listen to your views about your school and to look at your work. We consider St Anne's to be a good school. The main things we found out about your school are listed below.

- You make good progress and your attainment is above average by the time you leave school.
- You enjoy school, feel safe and trust the adults who care for you.
- You have good attitudes to learning; you behave well and are considerate to others.
- You are keen to take on responsibilities around school and you are interested in your local community.
- Teachers are good at making your learning interesting and fun.

In order to make your school even better, we have asked the governing body to work with the headteacher and staff to focus on a few key areas. We have asked them to make sure all of the teaching in the school is as good as the best. We have also asked them to help you make even better progress in mathematics and to make sure those of you who find learning easier always receive more challenging work. Finally we have asked them to use all of the information they have about your learning to carefully plan how the school can further improve.

We are sure that with such positive personal qualities you will all help your teachers and headteacher to further improve the school. Please accept our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson
Her Majesty's Inspector

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