

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	103434
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376903
Inspection dates	24–25 April 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Merchant

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	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael McConnell
Headteacher	Bernadette Keenan
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Merchant

Additional Inspector

Kathryn Brunt

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Twenty lessons or parts of lessons were observed, amounting to ten hours in total. Two of these were carried out jointly with the headteacher. All seven classroom teachers and two non-class-based teachers present in school at the time of the inspection were observed teaching. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the plans for improvement, assessment information, lesson plans, the school's monitoring information and various school policies. In addition, the work of a range of pupils in Years 2, 3 and 6 was scrutinised. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires received from 18 parents and carers, 97 pupils and 2 staff members.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average, while that of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is average. A very large majority of pupils are of a wide range of heritages, the largest groups being pupils of Black or Black British, Caribbean, and Asian or Asian British, Pakistani heritages. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also high. Large numbers of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times. There is a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Reception class. The school exceeds the government's current floor targets, which are the minimum standards expected for attainment and progress. The school has achieved many awards including an Activemark and a Primary Quality Mark for basic skills. It also has National Healthy Schools Status.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. It provides excellent opportunities for pupils to thrive, develop and achieve exceptionally well, irrespective of their different circumstances. The school has improved significantly since its last inspection due to a relentless drive for improvement which continues unabated. Leaders recognise, for example, that more can be done to ensure even more outstanding lessons are taught and that more pupils reach the higher levels at the end of Years 2 and 6 in English and mathematics.
- Pupils achieve exceptionally well from very low starting points, and by the end of Key Stage 2, their attainment is broadly average and rising. A relentless focus on teaching sounds and letters ensures that by the age of six nearly all pupils are confident readers, and that reading skills by the age of 11 are above average.
- Teaching is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to pupils' exceptional rates of progress. In some lessons, learning falls short of being outstanding because pupils are given insufficient time to work independently and to talk about their findings.
- Pupils behave impeccably and know how to keep themselves safe in school and in the wider community. Pupils' personal development is excellent because they see their own potential, are given the self-confidence to work hard and aim high, and their attitudes to learning are extremely positive.
- The dynamic leadership of the headteacher, with strong support from her leadership team, has ensured that there is a very clear, shared vision of high-quality provision. School leaders check the quality of teaching and manage performance rigorously, providing constructive advice and training to staff. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning, and consequently pupils' achievement, are constantly improving. An exuberant learning ethos has been created, providing a wide range of activities which meet pupils' needs and

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interests very well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment so that a greater proportion of pupils exceed the levels for their age in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 by:
 - ensuring that effective techniques to teach extended writing across a range of subjects are employed consistently, so that all pupils write confidently and creatively
 - develop pupils' higher level problem-solving skills in mathematics.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in all year groups by giving pupils more responsibility for their learning by:
 - always ensuring that they have sufficient time to work independently and talk about their findings.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from their very low starting points. The well-organised provision provides children with exciting learning opportunities, allowing them to make choices and develop independence. Impressive gains are made in children's personal, social and reading skills in the space of one year. Consequently, by the time they start in Year 1, pupils' skills and knowledge are closer to, but still below, age-related expectations.

As pupils move through the school, they make outstanding progress and nearly all reach at least the expected levels for their age in English and mathematics by Year 6. Parents and carers agree that their children achieve well. Plans to teach writing more effectively, such as through raising awareness of the differences between formal and informal language, ensure that many pupils make outstanding gains in writing. Pupils' number skills have improved markedly since the previous inspection, and most are confident in solving number problems. However, inconsistencies in providing opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in some classes prevent more pupils reaching higher levels in English and mathematics.

The quality of learning in lessons is outstanding. Pupils are keen to do their best, work purposefully and greatly enjoy what they are doing. For instance, in a highly successful Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils were spellbound by the class teacher's lively and inspirational exposition and clever use of questions. She 'fired them up' to eagerly and enthusiastically express their feelings about two different characters from stories they had studied, and prompted all to make rapid progress in developing their descriptive writing skills.

There is very little difference in the progress made by pupils known to be eligible for

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free school meals and those from diverse backgrounds because staff are very conscious of pupils' individual needs and work successfully to close any such gaps. For example, the school works very effectively to support pupils who enter the school with particularly low levels of attainment and with the high number who are new to speaking English. Detailed plans to support these groups, coupled with the thoughtful deployment of learning assistants and timely interventions, ensure that they quickly make similar progress to that of their classmates.

Comprehensive systems are used to assess and track pupils' progress. Very detailed records enable leaders and teachers to keep a close check on how individuals and groups of pupils are doing. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make excellent progress. Staff are quick to identify pupils' individual needs and implement appropriate interventions. Teachers and teaching assistants help pupils by demonstrating skills precisely and teaching specialist vocabulary carefully.

Pupils make particularly strong gains in reading due to the systematic programme of interventions for those who find learning difficult. These carefully planned programmes of one-to-one and small group support are highly effective in raising pupils' attainment and self-esteem. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 demonstrate that they have acquired good strategies to tackle unfamiliar words in their reading books, and have gained a good level of independence in their reading. Reading skills are average by the end of Year 2. This pattern continues through Key Stage 2 and reading skills are above average by the end of Year 6. Teachers encourage pupils to experiment with vocabulary and imagery so that they develop a 'feel' for words. The very large majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires agreed that their children are making good progress at the school and that their needs are very well met.

Quality of teaching

The great majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire think that teaching is very good. Inspectors agree. Teaching is lively, tasks and concepts are clearly explained, and activities are carefully designed to challenge the pupils to learn at a swift pace. Adults ask perceptive questions and these help pupils to think and use more varied vocabulary in their answers. Effective use of talking partners, drama, role play and 'letter and sounds' activities helps pupils make rapid progress in their speaking and writing. In an exemplary Year 6 English lesson, pupils made rapid progress in their writing of persuasive text. They were enthralled by the teacher's excellent examples of writing prose to persuade an audience to do something, and were eager to offer their own ideas. Teachers plan very well to meet the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Skilled teaching assistants provide effective support for these pupils. They ensure that all are fully included in lessons and help them to overcome many of their barriers to learning. Consequently, they make progress equal to that of their peers. Where teaching falls short of outstanding, learning and progress are held back because teachers sometimes talk too much and over-direct the tasks pupils undertake. This limits the time pupils are actively and independently learning, and results in slower progress

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and less time for pupils to articulate what they have learnt.

The curriculum is very well thought out so that pupils from all backgrounds enjoy learning, achieve outstandingly well and gain many skills for their wider personal development. Classrooms glisten with wonderful displays and the use of computers greatly enhances the quality of learning. Residential trips, frequent cultural and educational visits and inputs from specialist teachers for physical education and music all play a significant part in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. In lessons and through thoughtful and stimulating assemblies, pupils are encouraged to reflect on many spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school promotes pupils' well-being by helping them to develop their self-esteem and confidence, particularly those pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. Consequently they behave very well, feel safe and valued, enjoy coming to school and work hard. Attendance is above average and the school has worked hard with the tiny minority of pupils who find punctuality a problem, so that this has improved greatly. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour and bullying, but almost all pupils consider behaviour in school to be good. Pupils report that bullying is extremely rare and school records confirm an absence of racist incidents. Pupils clearly understand that there are different types of bullying and are confident that any bullying would be dealt with effectively. The school is rightly proud of its willingness and ability to work with pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour. One pupil told inspectors how the attention to his individual needs and the time given by the headteacher and staff to resolve his problems had significantly improved his behaviour. He commented, 'The school has changed my life'.

The breakfast club exemplifies the warm, stimulating, high-quality care given to pupils. It provides a very good start to the day and encourages many pupils to attend school and arrive on time. The caring ethos of the school is evident in all the school's actions and interactions between staff and pupils.

Leadership and management

Inspirational leadership and a relentless pursuit of excellence are the main reasons why pupils' achievement has risen sharply over recent years and is now outstanding. The headteacher is widely acclaimed by staff, parents, carers and governors as having been hugely instrumental in improving the school. She leads the way in driving ambition, and has established a shared sense of purpose to raise the aspirations of pupils and teachers alike. Consequently, teamwork is strong, staff morale is high and pupils' progress continues to accelerate.

The senior team checks the school's performance rigorously. Leaders use their excellent coaching and mentoring skills to offer constructive advice and training, and highly effective teachers are used very well to extend and share good practice. This

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has supported the rapid improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

The school promotes equality for all pupils vigorously through its sophisticated monitoring and exemplary support systems. There is no evidence of any discrimination. Outcomes for all groups of pupils, given their different starting points and backgrounds, are broadly similar, indicating that the school's commitment to equal opportunities is fully translated into practice. The governing body supports the school very well. It plays a key role in promoting effective safeguarding practices and the strong links with parents and carers. School leaders have ensured that both the curriculum and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Pupils are taught to be thoughtful and reflective, to behave safely and to consider the needs of others. Pupils from all backgrounds greatly enjoy learning, achieve very well and have an excellent preparation for the next phases of their lives.

Staff show a strong sense of teamwork and pride in what has already been achieved, coupled with a total absence of complacency. School self-evaluation is highly accurate and the school knows exactly what to do to sustain and build upon its excellent record. Almost every aspect of its work has improved substantially since the previous inspection because of the tireless determination of the headteacher, staff and governors to achieve excellence in all they provide.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



26 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, B12 0ER.

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we came to visit your school recently. We enjoyed every minute of our time with you. A special 'thank you' to those of you who came and talked to us about your work and told us about all the wonderful things you are involved in. Here are some of the really good things we found out about St Anne's.

- Your headteacher and all the staff work very hard to provide you with the best education possible. They take great care of you and want to see you all achieve the best that you possibly can.
- In Reception, you get off to a good start and you make outstanding progress as you pass through the school. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you reach standards in all your subjects that are similar to those expected in other schools across the country - and they are getting better each year. This is because your teachers teach you very well and also because you work very hard.
- We were very impressed by the way subjects in your curriculum are linked together, which makes your work so interesting, and how quickly you become confident readers.
- The very best thing about your school, apart from your excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning, is that learning is fun. Your teachers plan exciting and challenging activities for you which help you learn quickly and which you really enjoy.

Even though you go to an outstanding school, your amazing headteacher, governors and staff still want the school to get even better. We have asked them to make sure that more of you reach the higher levels in the tests that you take at the end of Year 6 and that you are able to learn more things on your own.

We know you will continue to do your very best at St Anne's and we wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant
Lead Inspector

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