

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112897
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378601
Inspection dates	3–4 May 2012
Lead inspector	Derek Aitken

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	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Dennis Higgins
Headteacher	Claire Sierotko
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2007
School address	Lightwood Road Buxton SK17 7AN
Telephone number	01298 23589
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Derek Aitken Additional Inspector

Patricia Underwood Additional Inspector

Paul Delbridge-Smith Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 19 lessons taught by 10 teachers, and scrutinised pupils' work. Inspectors listened to pupils reading. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment information. The inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 179 parents and carers, 104 pupils and 20 staff.

Information about the school

St Anne's Catholic Primary School is larger than most primary schools. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small and increasing number of pupils joining the school are of minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is well below average. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage through two classes: a Reception class and a mixed Reception and Year 1 class.

The school meets the current floor standards, which set the government's minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school has Healthy Schools status and holds the Artsmark (Bronze) award.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because leaders have not ironed out some minor variations in the quality of teaching, so pupils' overall achievement is good rather than excellent, and strategic planning for developing provision is not refined enough to maximise the contribution leaders at all levels can make to realise their aspiration of excellent achievement for all pupils.
- Pupils achieve well and leave Year 6 with attainment that is significantly above average. The secure command of basic skills that they acquire in Reception enables them to become self-confident, articulate learners. They develop their reading skills exceptionally well and make good progress in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good. Some outstanding elements were observed, for example when creative approaches were used skilfully to develop pupils' thinking skills and independence. Where teaching is occasionally satisfactory, questioning and other techniques used to present and consolidate new learning are not of a sufficiently high quality to accelerate pupils' learning.
- Pupils behave well and are exceptionally keen to support each other's learning in shared activities. Children in Reception settle quickly to their work, play together well and mostly concentrate well during activities that require their sustained attention. Pupils and their parents and carers are right to think that the school provides a safe environment where pupils thrive socially and emotionally.
- Staff, under the purposeful guidance of senior leaders, have been successful in maintaining pupils' attainment at consistently above-average levels. The points for development identified at the last inspection have been tackled successfully. This has contributed to improvements in assessment practice and pupils' writing skills. School performance is managed well and the leadership of teaching is firmly established so that all staff have high expectations for pupils' progress.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and, in so doing, further raise pupils' achievement by:
 - ensuring all lessons, particularly lesson starters, are carefully planned to challenge pupils, develop their thinking skills and maximise opportunities for them to learn independently.
- Enhance the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - refining plans for improving provision to maximise the contribution all leaders, including members of the governing body, can make to school review and development.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Inspection findings fully endorse the view of parents and carers that pupils make good progress. Children's skills and knowledge on entry to Reception are in line with the expectations for their age. They make fast progress, as work is well matched to their different levels of ability, including in the mixed-age class. In the last few years, children's progress has quickened so that almost all children start Year 1 with skills and knowledge comparable to their peers nationally, and an increasing number exceed the early learning goals.

Pupils build steadily on this promising start, and by the end of Year 2 pupils are working typically six months ahead of age-related expectations. For example, in an excellent Key Stage 1 lesson, all pupils demonstrated a secure understanding of punctuation markers in separate sentences and more-able pupils confidently and accurately identified these features in extended paragraphs. This good progress is maintained consistently throughout Key Stage 2, and by the end of Year 6 overall attainment is significantly above average at both Level 4 and Level 5. Basic skills are taught very effectively, so that pupils quickly acquire the confidence, for example in mathematics, to apply their understanding of simple operations securely to devise strategies for solving problems or for investigating the properties of shapes. Pupils' targets are firmly embedded to help them develop their writing skills well across a broad range of genres. The majority of older pupils employ a suitably varied range of parts of speech such as similes, metaphors and 'powerful' verbs very effectively to enhance the quality of their writing.

All groups of pupils make good progress in lessons. Consequently, there are no significant variations in the performance of pupils with regard to gender, ethnicity or eligibility for free school meals. Pupils' achievement is slightly better in English than mathematics as most pupils make exceptionally fast progress in reading. By the end of Years 2 and 6, attainment in reading has risen to above-average. Pupils enjoy

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reading, accurately recall facts and blend phonemes together correctly to sound out unfamiliar words. They draw telling comparisons with other works by the same author. More-able pupils in Year 6 demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of the meaning of highly descriptive vocabulary.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are challenged and supported well by the staff and also make good progress. For example, in an English lesson these pupils shared their ideas eagerly to create expressive settings for their stories.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers rightly believe that pupils are taught well, and their children agree. Reception children are keen learners and most activities are well chosen to promote their learning, for example when counting to establish directions from a given starting-point. On a few occasions, tasks for middle- and lower-attaining children are directed too much by the staff, and this limits opportunities for children to think for themselves. In all lessons, teachers' high expectations for pupils' progress and behaviour promote a purposeful climate for learning, fostering secure relationships and pupils' good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

Lessons are usually characterised by a brisk pace and suitable levels of challenge for all groups of pupils. In the outstanding lessons, teachers make expert use of carefully prepared, stimulating resources to motivate and stretch all groups of pupils and develop their oral skills. This was demonstrated in an excellent Key Stage 1 geography lesson where pupils confidently made comparisons between life in Africa and in England. Similarly, in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson, well-judged contributions from the teacher enabled pupils to explore different options for establishing formulae. Most teachers are adept at recognising when pupils have mastered a concept and quickly move the lesson on to its next stage. Reading skills are taught well and this underpins pupils' confident acquisition of oral and written language. Teaching assistants support disabled pupils and those with special educational needs skilfully, for example in helping them to draw on their prior knowledge of the local area to consider the advantages and disadvantages of a new housing estate on a green-field site.

On a few occasions teaching is only satisfactory, for example when explanations and methods of presenting new learning are not varied enough to challenge pupils, or to enable them to think for themselves or learn independently. This restricts pupils' progress, most frequently during lesson starters. Marking is of good quality. Teachers provide pupils with constructive guidance on how they can improve their work. Pupils' self-assessment practice is well developed. Pupils are keenly aware of their levels and know what they need to do to strive to attain the next, higher level. This helps to develop their confidence in taking responsibility for their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

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Pupils' hardworking approach and positive attitudes underpin their enjoyment of lessons, sense of well-being and good achievement. Reception children follow routines well, listen carefully, share resources willingly and take turns. From an early age pupils behave responsibly and show consideration for each other. Pupils are keen to collaborate and support each other very effectively in paired or group tasks, for example when discussing problem-solving hypotheses. On a few occasions, when the pace of learning drops, pupils are compliant rather than animated. Pupils respect the school rules and respond quickly to reminders, praise and encouragement for good behaviour. They behave well in public areas, such as the dinner hall, the playground and in assemblies. They understand the school's expectations and respond promptly to guidance, as reflected in the extremely rare incidence of exclusions in the school's records. These records demonstrate that any untoward incidents, including those with a homophobic or racist perspective, are similarly rare.

Inspection findings are endorsed by the vast majority of parents and carers, who believe that pupils behave well and that their children are safe in school. Pupils agree and believe that the school is a cohesive community with a strong 'family feel', promoted, for example, through the valued efforts of school councillors or 'playground pals.' The good use pupils make of these opportunities to take on responsibility and acquire self-esteem through contributing actively to school life is reflected in their self-confidence and willingness to express their ideas, for example as spokespersons in lessons. Pupils of diverse ethnic heritages play and work happily together. Vulnerable pupils are closely monitored and exceptionally well looked after. Pupils have a sharp perception of how cyber-bullying occurs. They report that bullying in any form is uncommon and that when it happens it is invariably restricted to name-calling. A few parents and carers indicated some dissatisfaction regarding the school's response to such incidents. Pupils report that swift and effective actions are taken by the staff on these occasions. Inspectors found that some confusion could arise because these actions are not always rigorously recorded or monitored by the staff. Attendance has been maintained at average levels for some years. Local factors, such as the school's vulnerability to snow closures, constrain attempts to increase attendance.

Leadership and management

School self-evaluation is accurate in its diagnosis of key strengths. The school has appropriate, well-considered structures to monitor the main aspects of provision, including teaching, and implement new initiatives to profit from helpful professional development and thereby improve outcomes for pupils. The school demonstrates a capacity for sustained further improvement. Leaders have clear expectations for pupils' progress and have been successful in establishing accountability across the staff for maintaining pupils' attainment at above-average levels in both English and mathematics over several years. Challenging targets are regularly met or exceeded. Staffing is stable and highly experienced. Teachers have improved the consistency in the rate at which pupils acquire secure writing skills and are now justifiably recognised as lead practitioners in the use of assessment within the local authority. Systems are working efficiently and leaders can provide convincing evidence of the

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positive impact of professional development on individual practice, but some variation in the quality of teaching remains.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and adapted well to promote pupils' good achievement across the school. Leaders promote equal opportunity in learning very effectively and ensure no group or individual underachieves. Relationships are very positive; there is no discrimination. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are identified early and the success of provision for them is reflected in the high proportion of these pupils who attain the expected Level 4 by the end of Year 6. The curriculum also promotes all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, as reflected in pupils' confident contribution and respectful responses in assemblies and their keen appreciation of environmental issues. The governing body is in transition as the terms of office of several of its members have recently come to an end. Appropriate steps have been taken to enable new members to become conversant with their roles. Strategic planning is not refined enough to establish measurable goals to enable leaders at all levels, including members of the governing body, to contribute to school review and development to maximum effect. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet current requirements.

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.



7 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Buxton, SK17 7AN

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school and for sharing your views with us, including through the questionnaires some of you completed. Yours is a good school.

- You are taught well from Reception to Year 6 and this helps you to reach above-average levels of attainment by the end of Year 6. You achieve well and make excellent progress in developing your reading skills.
- You told us you feel safe and that you are looked after well by the staff. You behave well around the school and your keenness to support each other in lessons creates a very positive atmosphere in lessons.
- The school is led well. Senior leaders work hard to ensure all groups of pupils are supported effectively in their learning and achieve well.

We have asked the staff to do the following things to help you achieve even better.

- Plan all lessons, particularly lesson starters, carefully to make you think hard and learn new things for yourself.
- Think closely about how all leaders, including governors, can make the best contribution to improving your education in the future.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by attending regularly.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken
Lead inspector

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