

St Anne's Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119511
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	379822
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2012
Lead inspector	Roger Gill

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glyn Hughes
Headteacher	Barbara Cuff
Date of previous school inspection	27 November 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Roger Gill
Rosemary Batty

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching in eleven lessons and/or withdrawal groups taught by ten teachers. 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 evidence, including the school's documents for self-evaluation and safeguarding. They also studied standards in reading, pupils' work books and the tracking system used by the school to monitor pupils' progress. Inspectors considered the 51 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, as well as those from pupils and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.

Information about the school

St Anne's is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is above average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs broadly reflects the national average. Since the previous inspection, the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has risen to about a third of the school population: the majority of these pupils are from Eastern European and Pakistani backgrounds. The school meets the current floor standards (the government's minimum expectation for attainment and progress).

Pupils can attend a breakfast club and an after-school facility that are privately run. A separate report for these facilities can be found on the Ofsted website. The school has Arts Mark Gold, Active Mark, an Eco-Schools Award and the International School Award (Bronze).

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	3
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school with a number of strengths. It is popular with parents, carers and pupils because as pupils say, 'we are a big family where we all look after each other.' The school's overall effectiveness is not yet good because too much teaching is satisfactory, especially in Key Stage 1 and in lower Key Stage 2, and leaders and managers are not acting rigorously enough to improve teaching to be at least good across the school.
- After a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 4 where teaching is satisfactory. In Years 5 and 6 progress accelerates and pupils achieve well because teaching is good. Standards in English and mathematics are average by the end of Year 6. This reflects pupils' good achievement overall from their starting points.
- Some teaching has a good impact on pupils' learning. However, too much teaching is satisfactory to promote consistently good progress throughout the school. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs progress at a similar rate as other pupils because of the effective support they receive in small groups.
- Behaviour and safety in lessons and around the school are good. Pupils are polite, attend regularly and enjoy helping those less fortunate than themselves. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are proud of their progress, especially those who have mastered English so successfully that they are reaching nationally-expected levels. Pupils contribute to the school community well and welcome opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) to communicate with other pupils abroad.
- Since the previous inspection, leadership has successfully maintained pupils' good levels of personal development and average attainment at the end of Year 6. However, leadership and management are satisfactory overall because performance management, the management of teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress lack the necessary rigour to improve the consistency of pupils' progress and achievement as they move up through the school.

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?

- Make the quality of all teaching at least good and thus raise achievement further by:
 - ensuring that lesson-planning is consistent in matching tasks closely to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils, especially higher-attaining pupils
 - making sure that marking shows clearly what pupils need to do to improve their work
 - making sure that all pupils know exactly what they need to do to reach their next level.

- Ensure that leadership and management at all levels are more effective in improving the quality of teaching to at least a good standard by:
 - improving the rigour with which the quality of teaching is monitored
 - ensuring that the governing body fully understands how well pupils are achieving in all classes
 - improving how effectively assessment data are used to track pupils' progress

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally well below age-related expectations when they start. They make good progress and achieve well because of the good teaching they receive. Children learn well because teaching helps them develop the vocabulary, ideas, skills and confidence they need to succeed. For example, children in Reception mastered the concept of 'shortest' and 'longest' through skilful direct teaching, reinforcement in reading the words involved and opportunities to play using these mathematical ideas.

Progress slows to satisfactory in Key Stage 1, partly because of the significant number of pupils who join the school from abroad and partly because teaching does not match tasks closely enough to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson on The Little Red Hen, vocabulary used was too hard for those learning English as an additional language. By contrast in Year 2, pupils were learning to make programmable toys move in a predicted direction, but the work was too easy for a significant number of pupils. In Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4 where teaching is satisfactory. However, in Years 5 and 6 progress picks up in pace because teaching is good and tasks are appropriately challenging. By the end of Year 6 pupils reach average levels of attainment as a result of this acceleration of progress. Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress when taught in small groups. Although their rate of progress is similarly variable across year groups, their achievement is also good overall.

Standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 are well below average. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6 their standard of reading is average and sometimes above this. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are confident readers who enjoy books and the school's library is run by very active and involved librarians.

Gaps in the attainment of different groups of pupils are showing some signs of narrowing, although the inconsistencies in teaching limit the opportunities to close gaps more quickly. Parents and carers believe that learning and progress are good, often citing the care for pupils as the reason why progress is good. Inspectors agree that St Anne's is a caring school in which pupils achieve well despite some unevenness in their rates of progress across the school.

Quality of teaching

The vast majority of parents and carers, who responded to the inspection questionnaire, is pleased with the way that their children are taught. Pupils have similar opinions except fewer believe that they know how well they are doing. Inspectors agree that teachers form good relationships with pupils and try to make learning interesting. However, the quality of teaching is inconsistent, with too much that is satisfactory.

In The Early Years Foundation Stage, children develop their imaginations and social skills well in role-play situations such as The Dark Gloomy Cave or The Deep Cold River. Similarly, in the nursery class children gain confidence and develop positive attitudes to learning, especially the many who are new to speaking English and life in Britain. In Key Stage 1, teaching is satisfactory and improving because new programmes for reading, writing and mathematics have been successfully introduced. These are beginning to boost learning and progress, especially in reading and mathematics.

In Years 3 and 4 satisfactory teaching is characterized by steady progress, but some able pupils say that much of the work is too easy in mathematics and reading. However, in Years 5 and 6 pupils' progress is good and sometimes excellent. Pupils learn more quickly and better in lessons, as found in Years 5 and 6, where both teachers and pupils know precisely the steps needed to improve learning and raise standards. For example, pupils in Year 6 speak eloquently about all the demanding techniques they are being taught to make sure their writing is of a good standard. The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are identified clearly and teaching assistants provide effective support.

Marking is generally accurate but it does not provide clear enough advice to pupils about what they need to do next to improve their work. This is why, until they reach Years 5 and 6, pupils' understanding of how to reach their next level is generally rather vague.

The planned curriculum provides some good opportunities for pupils to acquire good personal qualities. They have some highly creative experiences such as performing poetry for Radio Lancashire and linking with pupils in fourteen schools abroad. Pupils enjoy learning Spanish and French. Success in all these wide and varied events has a positive effect on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Despite the merits of the curriculum it does not always result in sustained and good academic progress throughout the school, because activities are not consistently and accurately matched to pupils' needs.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers say that behaviour in the school is consistently good, and inspectors agree. The good behaviour shown by pupils in class and around the school has been maintained well since the previous inspection in which behaviour was highlighted as a main strength of the school. There are times when behaviour and attitudes are excellent such as when older pupils are given responsibilities to become prefects, head boy or head girl. This

system is so successful that pupils glow with pride when talking about their contribution and show maturity beyond their years in carrying out their duties. Pupils act safely at all times. Pupils, parents and carers say that anti-social behaviour or bullying is rare. Pupils feel secure and safe because they know to whom they can turn if being bullied or if upset. They show a good understanding of the different types of bullying. For example, older pupils know about cyber-bullying and staying safe on the internet. Older pupils enjoy applying for and undertaking roles such as school council members, librarians and playtime buddies. Attendance is average and is showing early signs of improving.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management have several strengths. For example, they promote well pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and provide a curriculum that also supports effectively pupils' positive attitudes to school and their personal development. Older pupils, for example, enjoy talking about how they are raising money for disadvantaged people abroad or the regular trips they undertake to museums locally. However, leadership and management are satisfactory because the management of teaching and learning is less effective in tackling and improving the significant amount of satisfactory teaching. Monitoring of teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress are regular but lack some rigour in using the outcomes to drive improvement. For example, advice to teachers after an observation does not provide clear enough guidance about what needs to be done to make teaching more effective; the school's system for tracking pupils' progress is too cumbersome; and general monitoring does not make sure that lesson plans match tasks closely to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils.

The maintenance of pupils' good personal development and the early signs of improvement, for example in Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics, demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

The governing body is fully involved in the life of the school and has a strategic view that is resulting in some dramatic improvements to a very cramped building. It is involved in regular discussions about pupils' progress, but does not ask detailed enough questions about the performance of classes or groups of pupils, relying too heavily on the performance of pupils in Year 6 to give an indication of the success of teaching overall. Arrangements for safeguarding are effective and meet the statutory requirements. Leaders and managers are successful in including all pupils equally in the life of the school.

The school provides an appropriately broad and balanced curriculum. It provides a wealth of enrichment activities that play an important role in supporting pupils' personal development and their basic skills. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. As a result, by the time they reach Year 6, pupils are mature, thoughtful and outward-looking.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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.
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.
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.



22 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anne's Roman Catholic Primary School, Blackburn, BB2 1LQ

My colleague and I enjoyed inspecting your school. Thank you for being so pleasant, especially those of you that showed us round, came for a discussion or read to us.

You go to a satisfactory school, which has some good features that make you feel proud. For example, your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. You rightly feel pleased with the social and cultural opportunities provided by the huge range of nationalities and backgrounds that exist in St Anne's. We agree with you that behaviour and safety are good. You all feel safe because any rare cases of bullying are dealt with promptly. Your achievement is good overall, although you make the best progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. In some classes the work you are given is too easy and this slows your progress. We judge that you could do even better by the time you leave school if your learning and progress were more consistently good in every class.

We think that the recently-introduced scheme to help the younger ones learn letters and their sounds is working well. The Every Child Counts project is also having a positive effect on your learning. In your questionnaires you give your top marks to the teachers who are, you tell us, interested in your ideas and try to help you do as well as you can. We agree with you when lessons are good, but not all are at that standard. We have asked your headteacher and governors to make sure that all teaching provides work at just the right level for each of you. To do that, your headteacher and senior staff should give more detailed advice to teachers about how to improve your learning. You can all help by trying hard at all times, especially with any extra challenges in lessons that come your way.

Yours sincerely,

Roger Gill
Lead Inspector

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