



St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105088
LEA Wirral
Inspection number 277291
Inspection dates 5 July 2006 to 6 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Frances Gander CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Highfield South
School category	Voluntary aided		Rock Ferry
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Birkenhead, Merseyside CH42 4NE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 6453682
Number on roll	254	Fax number	0151 6453682
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs L Evans
Date of previous inspection	5 July 2006	Headteacher	Mr T McBeath

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 5 July 2006 - 6 July 2006	Inspection number 277291
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves the parish of St Anne's in Rock Ferry. The area in which most of the pupils live is socio-economically below average. Almost half of the pupils in the school are entitled to free school meals. The school has a Nursery for up to 60 part-time children and almost all of them transfer into the Reception class. The school has recently begun to offer an 'Integrated Care' facility where some children who attend the morning session are cared for during the afternoon session. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, although over a quarter of the children in the Nursery and Reception classes receive speech and language therapy. During the last three years the school has experienced a period of significant turbulence, with a lack of settled and consistent educational direction and a decline in standards.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the Foundation Stage.

Overall the school is ineffective because the provision for the Foundation Stage children is not as good as it should be and achievement is therefore inadequate. Teaching and learning for these pupils is inadequate because work is often too easy for them. Assessment of their progress is not robust enough to ensure that learning activities meet the needs of each pupil. Resources are not used effectively enough to support their learning. Consequently, children in the Foundation Stage do not build well enough on previous experiences, are insufficiently challenged and do not make the progress they should. The school has identified these weaknesses and has firm and sensible plans in place to remedy them in the coming school year.

The quality of the provision in the rest of the school is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 declined over the last two years and pupils badly underachieved, due largely to the instability of staffing and an inaccurate assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. Standards have started to improve and pupils are now starting to achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 to 6 as a result of the new more realistic and challenging targets that are based on more robust information about pupils' progress and the improved teaching. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. Throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 there are examples of good lessons, which engage and motivate pupils. Weaker aspects of teaching are the use of marking to indicate to pupils how they might improve and the sharing of targets with them so that they know what they are aiming for. Personal development of pupils and the care provided for them are good. These are the strongest areas of the school's work and result in pupils behaving well, wanting to learn and showing care and concern for others.

Satisfactory leadership and management, supported by the local authority, has now stabilised the school by halting the legacy of underachievement and declining standards. The school has appropriately tackled all the issues identified from the last inspection but the past underachievement and declining standards, along with weaknesses in the Foundation Stage, have resulted in a decline in the overall performance of the school. However, considerable improvements have been made in a very short space of time, which have had a positive effect on achievement. Consequently, the school now has good capacity to improve further. The school's evaluation of its performance was accurate and honest but over cautious. It did not fully take into account the impact of the improvements made during the last year. With the exception of the Foundation Stage it is now providing an acceptable quality of education and satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve all aspects of provision in the Foundation Stage.
- Ensure that pupils are more aware of what they are aiming to achieve and how to improve their own work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are average and after several years of serious underachievement pupils' achievement is now improving, but achievement and standards remain inadequate in the Foundation Stage. When pupils enter the Nursery their attainment is below that expected, particularly for some, in their language development. During their time in the Foundation Stage pupils make insufficient progress and do not achieve well enough. As a result, by the end of the Reception year, they do not meet the standards expected for their age and enter Year 1 with quite a bit of ground to make up.

In 2004 and 2005 there was a decline in the standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 6, especially in mathematics and science, where a third of pupils did not reach the nationally expected level for pupils of their age. Results were much better in English. Pupils' progress between the ages of 7 and 11 was extremely weak in comparison to national rates of progress. The higher attaining pupils underachieved in all three core subjects compared to their performance in Year 2. This underachievement was a result of staffing instability and inaccurate and inconsistent assessment of pupils' progress and standards. The school's assessment of pupils was insecure and, as a consequence, the targets being set for pupils and the school as a whole were unrealistic. The school's monitoring, evaluation and analysis of the situation provides clear reasons and explanations for this decline. Consequently, new improved systems of assessment have been introduced and are being used effectively. Teaching has stabilised and is improving. The most recent unvalidated Key Stage 2 test results show improvement with more pupils reaching both the expected and the higher levels than in the previous two years. They provide strong indication that despite the weaknesses still evident in the Foundation Stage pupils' attainment and progress have much improved. Part of this improvement at Key Stage 2 is also attributable to an increased stability in staffing and an improvement in the quality of teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school life and almost all of their lessons. A few say they would like more activities at break time and after school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. Pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, behave well in lessons and around the school. They understand right from wrong and say they like the school's new system to monitor behaviour: they all want to stay in the 'sunny zone'. They show a good level of care and concern for each other and know how to work in harmony with people from different ethnic backgrounds. Good relationships exist with all the adults and because

of this pupils will ask for help if they need it. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and enjoy taking part in activities within the local community. Safe and healthy lifestyles are strongly encouraged. The school council is rightly proud of the improvements that have been made as a result of their suggestions, such as the introduction of fruit snacks and healthy lunches. Pupils' increased achievements and steady progress in their literacy and numeracy will aid them when they leave the school. The hard work, effort and attitudes of the pupils, as well as an improvement in their behaviour and attendance, have played a significant part in raising standards.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There are examples of good quality teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2. The strengths of teaching lie in the management of the behaviour of pupils, the timing and pace of lessons and the opportunities for pupils to work in groups on an interesting range of activities. The teaching assistants provide valuable support for pupils' learning and work very closely with the teachers. Assessment is satisfactory. Teachers are using this well to track progress and identify when pupils are not making enough progress and they are now quickly responding to this information by providing additional work or intervention. Although pupils are aware of the learning objectives of the lessons, and in the better lessons they are reminded of these throughout the session, they are not always aware of any individual targets they have been set, such as for literacy and numeracy, or how well they are doing in them. A similar situation occurs in the marking of pupils' work where they are not always given clear indicators for improvement.

The above strengths in teaching are absent in the Foundation Stage, where teaching is inadequate. Although a range of activities are planned for children in the two classes the expected learning outcomes are the same for all of them, regardless of age, ability or developmental level. Consequently, older children who are about to go into Year 1 are undertaking activities at the same level as those in Nursery. These children, in particular, are insufficiently challenged. Activities do not hold pupils' interest for long enough and they flit from one to another. Assessment of progress is not carried out or recorded effectively enough to show progress over a timescale or to enable staff to have an accurate view of what pupils should learn next. Over the last few years teaching in Key Stage 2 has not been strong or consistent enough to make up for the underachievement encountered in the Foundation Stage. However, the situation is now much more stable and the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is such that pupils are now learning satisfactorily and making up for lost ground. It is for these reasons that, despite the inadequacies of the Foundation Stage, teaching is satisfactory overall.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It appropriately meets the needs of the pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. The additional needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified and there is a good range of intervention and additional strategies in place to help them make progress. This is having a positive effect on their achievement. There is a strong emphasis on promoting literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to visit places connected with the topics they are studying. The amount of activities provided after school is satisfactory but pupils, especially the girls, would like a greater variety. There are good links with local organisations, with pupils taking part in community activities, such as raising funds for local causes, and presenting drama productions.

Curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage is inadequate. It does not provide suitably challenging activities or a sufficiently stimulating environment to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities. The resources used to support learning activities are of poor quality, especially for outdoor play, and limit the opportunities for exploration and investigation.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and child protection procedures are secure. The most vulnerable pupils are particularly well supported because of the school's very good links with multi-agency teams. There are good arrangements for health, safety and individual welfare needs and consequently the vast majority of pupils feel happy and secure in school. Most pupils say they feel safe, free from bullying and all forms of discrimination. The comprehensive review of the school's behaviour policy has been successfully implemented and pupils clearly understand and respond to the new arrangements. Parents too comment positively on these improvements. Pupils trust the adults who work with them and know where to turn to for help. Teachers know pupils well and provide good support for them in lessons but academic guidance, through marking and target setting, could be improved to ensure that pupils have a better understanding of how they might progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership, through a shared determination to take the school forward, has restored staff morale and a good team spirit is evident. There is now a clear vision for the school's future that rightly focuses on improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. With the support of the local authority the school has identified the priorities for improvement and how these are to be achieved. It is now carefully planning for future developments, rather than reacting to issues, and demonstrates good capacity for further improvement. The

headteacher and deputy headteacher work well as a team. Each brings their own strengths to bear upon the school's leadership and management. Governance is satisfactory. Governors share the vision for the school's future and are becoming more actively involved in monitoring the work of the school. They manage the school finances well. The views of all members of the school community are encouraged and acted upon where appropriate, and the vast majority of parents are satisfied with what the school provides.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	4	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, we visited you recently to find out how well your teachers are helping you with your learning and your personal development.

Thank you for being very friendly, polite, well behaved and willing to talk to us. It was very useful to know what you thought about how well you were doing, what you liked about your school and what you wanted to be improved.

What really impressed us about your school was:

- that you enjoyed most of the lessons and the activities
- how hard you try to get on well with everyone and do as you are asked
- how you have improved your behaviour
- how your attendance has improved
- how much you want to do well and how you look after your school
- how well your teachers know you and ensure that you attend a safe and attractive school.

We felt that the school could make some improvements to the Nursery and Reception classes so that these children can get off to a better start. Also, we felt that to further help you in your studies, the school needs to make sure that you know what personal targets you are working towards and how well you are doing. We also thought that it might help you if, when your work was marked, it contained some information on how you could improve it.

I hope you carry on enjoying school and continue to help your teachers all you can.