



St Annes on Sea St Thomas Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119552
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280591
Inspection dates 5 April 2006 to 6 April 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Sheila Mawer

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Thomas Road
School category	Voluntary aided		St Annes
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Lytham St Annes, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01253 722022
Number on roll	235	Fax number	01253 722886
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev Peter Law-Jones
Date of previous inspection	1 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr Ted Dempsey

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 5 April 2006 - 6 April 2006	Inspection number 280591
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Thomas' is an average size school in St Annes, a seaside town with a lot of rented accommodation. The school provides for an above average number of transient families. Most children are from white British backgrounds. The proportions with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those eligible for free school meals are below average. Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with average attainment. The school has been operating without a permanent headteacher since 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. This judgement matches the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. Parents are fully justified in the confidence they have in the school when they say, 'it is really making a positive contribution to our children's lives'. All the adults are strongly committed to providing a good quality of care and support for the children. The school gives good value for money.

Children achieve well. They make good progress and reach standards that are above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. Foundation Stage children make good progress because of effective teaching and good links with the neighbouring nursery. Children's personal development is good. They behave well and are keen to learn.

Teaching is good; it enables children to learn well. Weaknesses in planning sometimes prevent the most able children from doing as well as they could. Although lessons are interesting and encourage children to work hard, there are limited opportunities for them to plan their own learning or know how well they are doing. The good curriculum provides varied and enjoyable learning experiences.

Leadership and management are good. The school has been working without a permanent headteacher for over two years but the associate headteacher, key staff and governing body have brought about good improvement since the last inspection. They are continuing to move the school forward with a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The school's capacity to improve further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that lesson planning in all classes enables the gifted, talented and more able children to meet challenging targets in their learning.
- Improve opportunities in lessons and through marking and setting targets, for children to be more involved in planning and reviewing their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. In Key Stage 2, standards have risen since the previous inspection through better teaching and improved provision for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils now achieve well because of lively and interesting teaching. Almost all children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 having achieved the early learning goals.

Through the rest of the school children make good progress and, at ages 7 and 11, they reach above average standards. Numbers reaching the higher levels are also above average. However, some gifted and talented children are not achieving as well as they should. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and art and

design are above average. The school is set to meet its targets for literacy and numeracy.

In the national tests in Year 6, standards rose well in 2003 and 2004, but fell in 2005 to average levels. However, fewer than half of Year 6 who took the tests in 2005 joined the school in Reception. The children who started in Reception made good progress and reached above average standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. Very good relationships result in a happy school where children say, 'everyone is really friendly'. Attendance is good. Children appreciate everything the school provides. They work hard and learn well. There are a few lively children but, overall, behaviour is good. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) helps children to become aware of the consequences of their actions. They understand how to follow a healthy lifestyle and eagerly participate in a wide range of physical activities. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are close links with the church. Visitors from other faiths and cultures inspire children to produce bright, creative artwork.

The school council is relatively new but the councillors value their role. They have prepared a questionnaire to gather children's views of the school and raised funds for playground equipment. Older children look after reception children and help in the library, but other opportunities to take responsibility in lessons and around the school are rather limited. The school participates regularly in local community events. For example, several children won prizes at a recent art exhibition. Their good academic skills and attendance prepares children well for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. All teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and extend children's thinking by questioning them well. Computer technology is used imaginatively to promote new learning and bring subjects alive. The teaching of writing and ICT has improved with good support from subject leaders. Very good relationships and support from staff help the children work hard and make good progress but sometimes there are too few opportunities for them to take responsibility and plan their own learning. Teaching assistants play an important part in lessons. Their effectiveness has improved since the previous inspection, especially in the very good support they provide for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There is a weakness overall in teachers' planning that has been identified by the school. There is no agreed format for planning lessons. Although some teachers in the best lessons plan effectively for all groups of abilities, others do not challenge the most

able children enough. This prevents them from making the strong gains in their learning of which they are capable.

Assessment is good overall. The thorough tracking of pupils' progress and careful marking of work provide teachers with a reliable picture of how well children are doing. Where teachers make good use of the pupils' targets, the pupils know how well they are doing, but the procedures are new and not yet used consistently throughout the school. Consequently, some children are not involved enough in their own learning and do not fully understand what they have learnt and how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum, including that of the Foundation Stage, is good. It is broad and balanced, and supports successful teaching and learning. Literacy, numeracy and ICT are used effectively in other subjects, for example, to retell bible stories and record the results of science investigations in graphs. Nevertheless, although pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported very well, the curriculum is not always planned well enough to extend fully the learning of the most able children.

The curriculum is considerably enriched through visits and visitors. There is an extensive range of after school clubs. The clubs are popular and well attended. Children particularly enjoy the residential visit to Borwick Hall.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Children know they can discuss any problems with a caring adult and that the problems will be resolved quickly and sensitively. Secure arrangements for health and safety systems and good child protection procedures, ensure children are safe and cared for well. Parents say the school is approachable and that it acts on their views. For example, they are pleased that their request for additional gates and fencing was met, and has improved the security of the site.

Although there are good assessment systems to provide clear information to measure progress, the process of setting targets is relatively new and does not yet enable all children to take some responsibility for their own learning. Where it is used well, children are rewarded for achieving their targets and this encourages them to work harder.

Effective induction procedures help children settle well when they start school. Good links with local secondary schools enable them to move confidently to their next stage of education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. They are driven by the very good leadership of the associate headteacher. In a short time, he has moved the school forward considerably and boosted staff morale after a long period of uncertainty. Effective monitoring has strengthened teaching in Key Stage 2 and raised standards. The improved tracking of progress has enabled 'booster classes' to be established and children are making good progress with the extra support.

The school's self-evaluation procedures are good. They take account of the views of children, parents, staff and governors. The associate headteacher, governors and key staff contribute well to preparing and reviewing these processes. It is a clear measure of their accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses that their judgements of its effectiveness match the findings of the inspection. Good progress has been made in addressing weaknesses identified by the last inspection. However, there is still more to do to improve teachers' planning and evaluate its impact on the progress of the most able children.

The knowledgeable governors assist the associate headteacher well in monitoring and reviewing finances. They have turned a deficit budget into a surplus and made a wise decision to allocate funding for additional staff to support large classes in Key Stage 2. All staff are fully committed to providing a caring ethos in which every child matters in their academic and personal development. The fact that no major area of provision is less than good, apart from satisfactory provision for the most able children is a measure of their success.

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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
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	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	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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	2	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	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	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

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Mr Ted Dempsey

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FY8 1JN

6 April 2006

Dear Children

Thank you very much for the lovely welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You have every reason to feel proud to be its pupils. We enjoyed talking to you and finding out about all the things you do. We agree with the headteacher, governors, your parents and yourselves that your school is good. We are glad that you feel that lessons are fun and everyone is friendly.

This is what we liked most:

you work hard in your lessons and are keen to learn

your behaviour is good and you get on well with each other

all adults in the school really care for you and help you in your learning

your teachers teach you well

the headteacher leads your school very well.

We have asked your headteacher and the governors to make your school even better by:

helping those of you who are gifted and talented to do work that makes you think even harder;
and

involving you more in lessons so that you can plan some of your own learning and helping you to know how well you are doing.

We appreciate all the help you gave us during the inspection. Good luck in the future and don't forget to keep on working hard and enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Mawer Kathleen McArthur
Lead Inspector Additional Inspector