



St Anselm's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101052
LEA Wandsworth LEA
Inspection number 285331
Inspection dates 24 May 2006 to 24 May 2006
Reporting inspector Roy Blatchford

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	19 Tooting Bec Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Tooting Bec
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		London SW17 8BS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02086729227
Number on roll	220	Fax number	02087676134
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Brendon Kearns
Date of previous inspection	19 March 2001	Headteacher	Mr Thomas Gately

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector met with groups of parents and governors, talked to staff and pupils, and observed most classes in action. Discussions were held with the head and deputy about the school's self-evaluation documents and performance data. Almost all families returned questionnaires which helped in the shaping of judgements, and a letter from the Chair of the Parents' Association was of particular note.

Description of the school

St Anselm's is a one-form entry primary school serving the community of families who worship at St Anselm's RC Parish Church. The well maintained premises were originally held in the trusteeship of the La Retraite community of sisters, and are situated in an area of very expensive private housing. Attainment on entry to reception is above the national average, with the percentages of pupils eligible for free meals and those who have special educational needs below that found nationally. About 16% of the children have a first language other than English, although the majority are fluent speakers of English.

The school is consistently oversubscribed, often with as many as four applicants for every place; however, there are currently a number of unfilled places in Year 4 which the school reports exist because there have been no applicants who fulfil the admissions criteria.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Anselm's is an outstanding school which has some special qualities: children whose behaviour and attitudes are exemplary; a staff and leadership team committed to excellence and restless to improve even when they are doing very well; a governing body and interested families equally focused on creating a place of high quality learning and well-being. There is a spirituality which permeates the day-to-day life of the school.

'An excellent primary school that turns out responsible children not just test passers'. 'Teaching and discipline have been consistently good throughout the seven years since reception'. 'Targets are clear and there has been good communication between home and school at all times'. 'An excellent learning environment where my son is able to thrive and reach his potential'.

With very few contrary voices, the quotations above from parents were echoed time and again on questionnaires returned to the inspector. A meeting with parents warmly reaffirmed the extent to which families, many of whom have enjoyed long associations with the school, consider St Anselm's to be a place of high standards, both academically and socially.

What is the cocktail which leads to this success?

First and foremost, children arrive at the school each day wanting to learn. Their self-starters are in very good working order. They take pride in all that they do. They treat one another, their teachers and the environment with dignity and care. They are proud to show their achievements: on the day of the inspection, the reception class presented an engaging assembly, with teachers, families, governors and a priest to guide and support. At the other end of the day, Year 6 pupils were animated and articulate in their discussions about paintings and sculptures they had seen on their visit to the National Gallery, as they prepare for their residential to Constable country. There is both a modesty and confidence about the children which results from their family support and from the way in which teachers bring out the very best in them.

When children arrive in classrooms they encounter learning environments of the highest quality. For example, in every classroom there is at least one display of distinction, whether that of Surreal Dreams in Year 4, London's Burning in Year 2, or Preparation for Our First Holy Communion in Year 3. Lessons throughout the school are underpinned with first-class planning by the teachers; they know the starting points of individual children and track their progress meticulously, with appropriately ambitious targets.

Very good teaching is rooted in warm relationships and high standards of classroom management. Teachers are enthusiastic about their subjects, harness resources (including interactive whiteboards) with skill and enterprise, and pose searching questions which check for understanding. They orchestrate time adroitly so that pupils feel that they are involved with what is going on and what the lesson's outcomes will be. The pupils' listening skills are noteworthy: for example, in a Year 5 mathematics

lesson; and in Year 1 and Reception at the end of the day, storytelling sessions were met with rapt attention.

As a result of this consistently good teaching, with a number of outstanding features, all pupils make exceptional progress throughout their years at the school. The 2005 Key Stage 2 test results, for example, record the school being in the top ten per cent of schools nationally in terms of a range of value-added measures. Based on the achievement and attainment tables only, the school in 2005 performed in the top three per cent nationally.

All this success does not just happen. In the words of one parent, the school is led by 'a superb headmaster who is incredibly creative and visionary, and one couldn't wish for a better person to front the show'. The headteacher has led the school with distinction for a number of years and, together with his deputy, knows the school and everyone in it exceptionally well. He has thus been able to make wise judgements about where a new national initiative will benefit the children and when best to stimulate a period of consolidation. He is surrounded by colleagues who recognise their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities with equal clarity, and who share their expertise openly in a spirit of challenge and support. One feature of the day's inspection was the way in which teachers were willing to debate educational issues and areas of improvement with the inspector, ever with an eye on how their proposed actions would impact on the quality of children's learning.

In particular, the headteacher's 'less is more' file prepared for the inspection reflected both an attention to detail at every turn, and the sense in which valuing people is a cornerstone of how the school is led, managed and run each day. For example, the annual calendar, with its respective roles and actions of headteacher, staff, governors and school association indicates team work of real intent, while a leaflet prepared by governors is purposeful evidence of the rigour with which they hold themselves and senior managers to account.

It is a feature of successful schools that they are restless to improve further. In discussion with staff, there is a self-critical wish to provide a curriculum which engages pupils even more. That said, the school community already enjoys a diverse array of visits out and hosts a range of visitors who enhance the children's awareness of contemporary social, cultural and moral issues. The staff are aware that the small minority of pupils who have English as an additional language need further support, and there is a constant debate about how best to broaden styles of teaching and learning, particularly for some of the most gifted and talented pupils. Tellingly, most parents commented that the school is particularly successful in meeting the needs of all abilities, never making individual children feel they are receiving special treatment.

In a school in which the focus is so resolutely on the pupils, it is perhaps fitting to close this report with their words. In discussions, they are singularly aware of the impact upon them of the Every Child Matters national agenda. They spoke eloquently of how such issues as adoption, healthy eating, serving the community, skills for friendship and buddying have been explored in lessons and with visiting speakers. Indeed, the Year 6 Preparing for Life booklets are a model of their kind. But what do the children most value about St Anselm's?

'I would like to show visitors how people here work as a group'. 'People here can all join together and get on'. 'In lessons you learn a lot more than you knew before'. 'I'm always learning more about myself'. 'The teachers always help you and make learning fun'. 'I am proud of our writing - all of our writing'. 'We are always working for our charities'.

And if they imagined themselves to be headteacher for the day, what would they change? Very little, although in the opinion of one younger child, 'We should sing more together'.

There is children's joy in learning and teachers' professional pride in a job well done which are evident to any visitor to St Anselm's. The school has moved on most positively since its last inspection, and is very well placed to continue its successes and sustain its mission.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

This is outstanding.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This is outstanding.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

This is outstanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

This is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is outstanding.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

This is outstanding.

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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?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	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?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	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

Children

It was a pleasure to visit your school just before half-term. A full report of my inspection is available to your families and is on the Ofsted website. I expect you will make a link to the report from your colourful school website!

You all know that you belong to a very successful church school, where you achieve highly in your studies. As you told me, it is also a school where you learn much about keeping yourselves safe and healthy, and you clearly value the range of visitors who come to lessons and assemblies to help you become young citizens of the future. In each of your classrooms, there are displays of work which strike any visitor as being of real quality. The effort that goes into producing these displays reflects the amount of hard work you and the staff put into every school day. In their few spare moments, your teachers are constantly talking about how they can improve what they do for you, and I know you have ideas which you share with them through the school council. For example, some of you mentioned having larger cloakrooms; others talked about making the hall more colourful, with sculptures from each class. You also offered some bright ideas for future theme weeks. Do continue that dialogue with your teachers - they value your views.

The school is very well led by Mr Gately and Mrs Macauley, who work closely with your parents and the governors to ensure standards of achievement are consistently high. I know you will continue to make the most of your time at St Anselm's and wish you every success.

Yours sincerely,

Roy Blatchford

Her Majesty's Inspector