



St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104104
Local Authority Solihull
Inspection number 286855
Inspection dates 27–28 February 2007
Reporting inspector Linda Rockey HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Nineacres Drive
School category	Voluntary aided		Chelmsley Wood
Age range of pupils	3–11		Birmingham B37 5DD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 7703878
Number on roll (school)	288	Fax number	0121 7703878
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Stuart Hill
		Headteacher	Marie Conway
Date of previous school inspection	10 February 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Serving the parish of St Anne's, this school is in an area of social disadvantage. It is in the first phase of a regeneration programme involving schools in North Solihull. There are plans for the school to close and reopen as a new school incorporating the other local primary school serving the parish. Most of the children at the school are from White British backgrounds. There are more boys than girls. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is above average. Around a quarter of the children have learning difficulties and disabilities. There is a falling birth rate in the area; as a consequence, in September 2006, the school's admission number was reduced from 45 to 30. The headteacher was appointed in January 2006.

The school has gained the National Healthy Schools standard and the Football Association Charter Award.

The privately run 'Angels' nursery and 'Saints' before and after-school club were inspected at the same time and are reported on separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Anne's is an improving school providing a satisfactory education. The inspectors agree with the school's self-evaluation that it has a number of strengths as well as areas to improve. It is a welcoming school with a distinctive Catholic ethos. Staff and governors share a clear vision summed up in the mission statement: 'Each one of us is unique. Each one of us is special.' Evidence of the successful realisation of this vision is seen in the children's self-confidence and mature approach to school life. Parents recognise this and value the contribution the school makes to their children's lives.

Children enjoy coming to school. They get off to a satisfactory start in the Foundation Stage where they are helped to settle quickly. Relationships between adults and children throughout the school are good. In particular, through the nurture groups, learning mentors help children to become confident and develop skills such as taking turns and listening carefully. Children are well cared for, feel secure and know whom to turn to for help. As a result, their attitudes to learning, behaviour and personal development are good. The sound curriculum is broad and balanced with a range of enrichment activities, which add enjoyment to the children's learning. It has been successfully organised so that children learn through themes. The school is aware that by improving provision for outdoor play, the curriculum for the younger children could be further enhanced. The school has also rightly prioritised the need to develop the transition between the Reception class and Year 1.

By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average, and in the main, children make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. That said, there are pockets of good progress across the school, notably in Years 5 and 6. The school has identified that children could do better in Years 1 and 2, especially in mathematics. Recent action taken to improve the teaching of mathematics is beginning to make a difference. On the whole, teaching is satisfactory with a number of good features. Although inspectors saw examples of effective teaching, there is not enough of it and this has an impact on the progress children make. Some lessons lack sufficient challenge for more able children and planned activities are not always well matched to children's learning needs. The school has started to keep a closer eye on children's rate of progress and has detailed information about how individual children are doing in reading, writing and mathematics. This is at an early stage and not all staff are using this valuable information well enough to ensure children make as much progress as they should.

The new headteacher provides effective leadership. Over the past year, she has established a clear focus on learning and teaching despite some significant challenges: the regeneration programme; a restricted budget; and staff turnover. The management team are taking increasing responsibility for checking the school's performance. However, they do not do enough of this and this means their involvement in raising achievement is limited. The Schools self-evaluation has improved and all staff are involved in improvement planning and review. The school improvement plan is detailed and takes a long-term view but it lacks success measures. Governors are supportive and recognise the need to develop their role as critical friends in order to hold the school sufficiently to account. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.

The school has made sound improvements since the last inspection. Improvement has accelerated recently, as shown by the better teaching in mathematics, which indicates the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the good teaching and make sure the best practice is shared, including appropriate challenge for more able children.
- Provide more opportunities for the management team to observe learning and teaching so that they can provide targeted support.
- Include success measures in the school improvement plan so that it is easier to monitor developments.
- Develop the Foundation Stage outdoor curriculum and improve transition between Reception and Year 1.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children are making satisfactory progress as they move through the school. When they start in the Nursery, the children's knowledge and skills are below the levels expected for their age. Many children are still some way short of reaching the goals for their age at the end of Reception. By the time children leave the school, standards are average. Children make better progress in Years 3 to 6 than they do in Years 1 and 2. Progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6 and the school's own data indicate that children in Year 6 are on track to reach their realistic but challenging end-of-year targets. Targeted support for vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and disabilities enables the majority to make satisfactory progress; some make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is an area of strength. Children speak very positively about staff: 'Everyone is kind in this school', commented one child. They enjoy school a lot and have good punctuality and satisfactory attendance. Satisfactory provision for basic literacy and numeracy ensures children are soundly placed for later education. Children have a secure knowledge of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and make good choices at break times. They relish taking on responsibility and make a good contribution to the school community. Led by the school council, children recently used their skills to raise money for additional play equipment. They proudly explained how the new table tennis tables had made a difference to lunchtime play. Children's spiritual, moral and social development is good. Cultural development is satisfactory and inspectors agree with the school that this area needs further development to make sure children are able to engage effectively with others from different cultural backgrounds.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Good features of teaching seen during the inspection included:

- practical, fun activities involving children's imagination and creativity - the effective use of interactive whiteboards - activities such as talk partners to develop speaking and listening skills - a clear explanation of what children need to achieve by the end of the lesson.

However, good teaching is not consistent across the school and this restricts progress. The pace of learning slows when teachers do not ask children challenging questions or check that they understand their learning tasks. Teaching assistants generally make a positive contribution to raising achievement but they are not always fully involved in supporting children during the start and end of lessons. Although teachers' planning is sound and identifies learning outcomes for different groups, more able children say, 'We need more challenging work.' Inspectors agree with them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Recent changes to the Nursery class mean that the youngest children are well catered for in the newly formed Foundation Stage unit. There is a good balance between child and adult led activities. When lessons are carefully planned to include practical and creative activities, children enjoy learning. A child remarked, 'This is fun - I don't want to go out and play!' The curriculum is enriched by visitors to the school. They help to bring learning to life and add to the children's enjoyment. Children spoke enthusiastically about a recent visitor. He talked to them about his experiences of the Holocaust. They were deeply moved. As one child reflected, 'It makes me feel happy to have my life.' The school is now seeking to further develop the curriculum by making greater links between subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, with good features. The good level of care and support shown by adults is appreciated by children. They know they are well looked after and can talk to someone if they have a problem. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Children have literacy and numeracy targets, but are not always clear about what they need to do to achieve them. Teachers' marking is improving and consequently children are beginning to develop an increased understanding of what they need to do to make better progress. There are some good examples of older children assessing each other's work using 'three stars and a wish'. This helps them to understand what is good about their work and what could be improved. External agencies are used well to support the needs of learners with difficulties and disabilities.

The school has appropriate procedures in place for safeguarding children. Arrangements for child protection and health and safety are secure.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory with good features. The school has a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses. Leaders at all levels are developing their skills and strategies for keeping a closer eye on how well children are doing but these are not yet rigorous enough to bring about consistently good teaching. Systems put in place are beginning to help children make better progress. Over the past year, the headteacher has been well supported by the local authority to tackle a number of challenges including a deficit budget. Working with the deputy, she has nurtured a strong sense of teamwork. Consequently, all staff are committed to making sure all children do their best. Despite the uncertainties facing staff regarding the school's closure and amalgamation, there is a clear focus on school improvement in a positive child-centred atmosphere. The school values the views of parents and acts appropriately on their responses, as shown by the recent introduction of the Parent Teacher Family Association (PTFA).

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making Miss Devi, Mrs Warboys and me so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and looking at your work. We think St Anne's is a satisfactory and improving school.

These are the things we were pleased about:

? St Anne's is a happy school where everyone is friendly and welcoming. ? Your headteacher is working hard with the staff to make the school even better. ? Teaching is improving and you told us you like practical, fun activities. ? You are becoming thoughtful, polite and sensible young people. ? Adults take good care of you and you told us that there is always someone to go to if you need help. ? You work well together and like having visitors ~ like the African drummer. ? We like the way so many of you take your special jobs so seriously. ? The school council works hard to make the school a better place. ? You enjoy school and most of you come to school every day and on time.

We have asked Mrs Conway and the other adults to do four things to improve your school even further.

- Make sure your work is hard enough and all your lessons are good ones.
- Involve more of the teachers in checking how well you are learning in class.
- Develop the school plan to make it easier to measure how well the school is doing.
- Provide more opportunities for younger children to learn outside and make sure their move from Reception to Year 1 goes smoothly.

I am sure you will all keep working hard and help the adults to make the school even better. I wish the children in Year 3 a very special day when they receive their first Holy Communion!