



St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104374
Local Authority Wolverhampton
Inspection number 286924
Inspection date 19 October 2006
Reporting inspector Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Stafford Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Fordhouses
Age range of pupils	3-11		Wolverhampton WV10 6NW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 558935
Number on roll (school)	331	Fax number	01902 558938
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Chris Scott
		Headteacher	Chris Breeze
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2003		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Anthony's is a large Catholic primary school. Whilst most pupils are of White British heritage, there are also a number of pupils from other European countries and minority ethnic groups, including two Traveller families of Irish heritage. About 40 children have English as an additional language. There is an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities but more pupils move in and out of the school than is usual. The school has been designated as an Extended School and care is provided for local children before and after school. Children enter the school nursery with a range of knowledge and skills but many are of a more limited range than is expected of children of this age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Anthony's is a delightful school that provides a good education for its pupils. The strong Catholic ethos that pervades all sections of the school's work securely underpins the excellent care provided for pupils and their outstanding personal development. The school is evaluative and has an accurate knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses. Its good track record of making improvements, such as a general upgrade in standards in Year 6 over the last four years, gives evidence of its good capacity for further improvement. Pupils achieve well to attain above average standards by Year 6 especially in mathematics and science. Good achievement, however, is not yet consistent throughout the school. Where progress is good, as in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6, it is because teaching is good and there is a clear understanding of what is needed to help pupils succeed. Good systems for checking pupils' progress, especially in the older classes, enables staff to identify those pupils who need additional support, and successful strategies are employed so pupils of all abilities achieve well. Teaching overall is good but it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 because teachers have not been as successful in developing activities that promote pupils' good learning. Pupils enjoy school, they feel safe and have very good attitudes to their work and want to do well. Good curriculum provision that is enhanced by many additional activities supports this process and prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education. Parents think very highly of the school. For example, one wrote that St Anthony's is '...a very special school. The teaching staff are excellent and my children have grown in confidence.' Leadership of the school is good. The headteacher has a strong sense of purpose and vision for the school. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and together they have enabled staff to move forward in their professional development. There is strong commitment to promoting pupils' spiritual development, education and care. Subject coordinators take much more responsibility for managing their subjects than in the past. However, they still do not take a leading role in evaluating the effectiveness of subjects for which they are responsible. Comprehensive monitoring by the senior leadership team ensures that there is an appropriate focus for school improvement. Evaluation of actions aimed at improvement is not rigorous enough, to ensure consistent success. Governors are well informed and, under the strong leadership of the chair of governors, they are supportive and work as effective critical friends for staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen teaching in Years 1 and 2 so that pupils of all abilities make good progress.
- Develop the management skills of subject coordinators so they take a leading role in monitoring the effectiveness of their subjects and in promoting improvement.
- Find more successful means of measuring the progress of programmes aimed at improving the school's effectiveness and raising standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall achievement is good. Children start in the Nursery with a smaller range of skills and experiences than is usual for their age and by the time they leave in Year 6, standards are above average especially in mathematics and science. This overall good progress is not consistent, however. Children make good progress through the Foundation Stage, especially in their personal and social education and in the development of language skills. Progress then slows to satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and picks up again in Years 3 to 6. Good progress in Years 3 to 6 is due to effective teaching and the successful setting of challenging targets for the next stage of learning, to which pupils respond well. Standards have risen in consequence over the last four years. Standards and progress often fluctuate from year to year. This is usually caused by an influx of new pupils into the school and the varying proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in different cohorts. Pupils of all abilities including those from different ethnic backgrounds make similar progress, because effective strategies are used to support and extend their skills. Pupils from the Traveller community also make good progress while they are in school but this dissipates when they do not attend.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding and results in them having very positive attitudes to life and to their work. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and the result of the consistent and strong role models provided by staff. Pupils are courteous and polite and have excellent relationships with each other and the adults around them. They show care and consideration towards each other. They reflect on their own actions and discuss in a very adult way the actions of others. Behaviour is excellent, especially in lessons. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and most attend very regularly. Only pupils from Traveller families are frequently absent and the school works closely with the staff of the Traveller Service to promote better attendance. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe and use their knowledge well to make positive decisions. Pupils of all ages respond very well to the opportunities to take on responsibilities and they make a substantial contribution to the school and to the wider community. All pupils in Year 6 have a 'Faith Friend' who is an older member of the Catholic community. This well monitored sharing of knowledge and experiences develops strong positive relationships from which both adult and child benefit. It has a significant impact on pupils' spiritual development and empathy. The school council has been very successful in promoting many positive changes in the life of the school and they are very proud of their achievements, especially the refurbished toilets and quiet garden for sensible play.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching ensures pupils' learning is promoted well in many areas of the school. Good teaching is evident in the Foundation Stage where all staff have a clear understanding of the needs of these young children. Activities are well structured and promote good learning because staff monitor children's daily progress carefully. Teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are satisfactory. Work is not always sufficiently challenging and well matched to the range of abilities in the class to ensure good progress. These problems have been identified by the senior leadership team and support is being given so that a broader range of activities is starting to be used to extend pupils' knowledge and skills. Teaching in Years 3 and 6 is good and many positive strategies are used to engage pupils' interest and to motivate them to learn. Resources such as the computerised whiteboard are used well to extend pupils' knowledge and many activities promote pupils' independent learning skills and teamwork. Teaching assistants are well utilised and play an important part in the learning of all pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and well balanced and provides a good basis for learning. It is enhanced by many additional activities that extend pupils' interest, knowledge and skills. The number and range of after school clubs, for example, is good. Religious education and the curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship are strong and play an important part in pupils' personal development. The curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved and now plays an important part in supporting pupils' independent learning. However, there has been very little thought given to how subjects can be linked more effectively so activities become more meaningful and engaging. The curriculum is well adapted to meet the needs of pupils who have a different home language to English and the school works well with the Traveller Service to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to the needs of Traveller children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. Pupils are highly valued as individuals and so feel very secure and well cared for. There are strong links with the parish and local Church that supports pupils' personal and spiritual well-being very successfully. Effective systems and excellent relationships ensure pupils feel confident to talk about any difficulties or worries. The school takes the well-being of its pupils exceedingly seriously and provision for aspects such as child protection and health and safety are secure. There are good links with outside agencies that are drawn on

as required. Academic support and guidance is very good. The attainment of all pupils is checked and challenging targets for future attainment regularly set and reviewed. This is not quite as effective at the end of the Reception Year as elsewhere but sharper assessment systems have been recently introduced to ensure a smooth transition into Year 1. Targets are shared with both pupils and their parents and underpin good progress because older pupils in particular have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. The achievements of pupils with learning difficulties are systematically monitored and effective targets for their progress helps them to achieve well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The lead given by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher is very good. The ethos of the school is very strong and there is a clear focus on raising achievement and on the pastoral care of all pupils. Comprehensive systems for checking the progress of pupils and in monitoring the effectiveness of the school are used effectively by the headteacher and deputy. The priorities for improvement are well founded and based on this accurate evaluation. The criteria by which the impact of these strategies for improvement are measured are not always effective and this reduces consistency and slows what would otherwise be fast progress. Subject coordinators are increasingly playing a more active part in managing and monitoring their subjects but they do not yet take the lead in ensuring improvement. The school regularly seeks the opinion of parents and children to find ways to improve the school further. This school has a good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

- am writing to say thank you for making me feel welcome in your school and for helping me with my questions. I really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what I found out about your school. What I liked about the school
- It is a good school where you are happy and enjoy your lessons.
- You get on exceedingly well with each other and with the adults in the school.
- You behave sensibly and are kind to each other.
- You try hard to do well in your work.
- You understand the importance of keeping healthy and safe.
- You are given opportunities to take responsibility and you do it extremely well.
- You try very hard to help other people at school, in the community and around the world.
- The teachers do all they can to help you get better in your work.
- All the adults in school look after you exceptionally well and help you feel safe.
- There are lots of activities for you to enjoy after school. What I have asked the school to do now
- To help teachers in Years 1 and 2 make activities more challenging so that pupils in their classes get on well.
- To help teachers who lead different subjects to gain a better idea of the quality of work in their subjects and so make improvements.
- To find more effective ways of checking how new ideas are working so the school continues to improve. Thank you again for being so polite and helpful to me.