



# St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104805  
**Local Authority** St. Helens  
**Inspection number** 287039  
**Inspection dates** 15–16 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Derek Aitken

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Monastery Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Sutton, St Helens
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Merseyside WA9 3SP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01744 811670
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	256	<b>Fax number</b>	01744 817471
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr J Knowles
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr J Shutt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 February 2002		

<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 15–16 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 287039
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This school is of average size but, as a result of declining birthrates, pupil numbers have been falling in the last few years. It serves an area of the town that has above average levels of deprivation. Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are no children with statements of special educational need. The school has a very wide range of partnerships with educational establishments and local businesses. Its Foundation Stage provision holds the Early Years Quality Mark.

## 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. It amply fulfils its mission, 'to build a lively school community on the foundation of shared Christian beliefs and values'. This strong ethos permeates all aspects of the school's work and contributes significantly to supporting pupils' outstanding personal development. The school has justly earned the full confidence of parents and pupils alike. As one girl said, 'I don't like school, I love it.' Pupils do well in their work and express their views openly and confidently in the knowledge that their contributions are valued by staff and their classmates. Pupils' self-esteem is effectively boosted through active participation and success in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school has enabled pupils to influence their education by establishing an effective school council and has purposefully exploited its links with the business community to enhance their knowledge of the world of work.

The overall level of provision in the Foundation Stage is excellent. Children are nurtured very well from the moment they pass through the doors of the Nursery. Most children begin school with skills which are below average; in their language and literacy they are well below. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes due to a highly stimulating and well-organised curriculum and an exceptional level of planning and teamwork by staff. By the time they enter Year 1 most reach the national expectations for children of this age, apart from language and literacy where standards are below average. Pupils reach broadly average standards in all the core subjects at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and they achieve well. Former inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in the middle years of the school have been tackled effectively. Strategies are consistently applied and the 'Mind Friendly Learning Initiative' is enthusing pupils and ensuring they are well engaged in their learning. Good teaching overall, especially in Year 6, enables pupils to make solid progress in both key stages and is now resulting in higher achievement. The quality of marking is variable, however, and does not offer the same level of support for pupils' progress. The school has correctly prioritised improvements to pupils' writing skills, in part to boost Level 5 results in Year 6, and is tackling this effectively in English lessons. However, opportunities are missed to reinforce and develop this skill across all areas of the curriculum. Leaders have implemented too few strategies to resolve this issue.

The school benefits from good quality leadership and management. Key priorities have been established and the vast majority have been implemented systematically. Managers have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although certain systems, for example, the use of data, need fine-tuning to ensure maximum impact on the quality of learning and the progress of pupils. Inspectors' judgements match those of school managers in all aspects except the quality of guidance and support provided for the pupils. The capacity for improvement is good. The school offers good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Track the progress of specific groups of pupils, particularly higher attainers, to maximise their achievement.

- Provide more opportunities in every subject to develop and extend pupils' writing skills.
- Eliminate the inconsistencies in the quality of marking to help all pupils improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

During their time in the Foundation Stage children make good progress due to high quality teaching and an exceptionally good curriculum. By the time they begin Year 1, most pupils have achieved the expected goals in all areas except language and literacy. Whilst pupils' progress in this area is also good, standards are still below the expected level on entry to Year 1.

During Key Stage 1, pupils build well on their earlier attainment and reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. For a number of years, progress during Key Stage 2 has generally been satisfactory, resulting in Year 6 test results which are broadly average. Improved teaching is ensuring that pupils are now progressing well. The school has set significantly higher targets for Year 6 pupils in next year's tests and the indications are that these will be met. Test results in a number of years have shown some variation between boys and girls. The school believes that over time there is no significant difference in boys' and girls' rates of achievement, but has not tracked this aspect in any real detail. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively supported and achieve as well as the others.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils consider that school is a happy, friendly place where staff help them and make lessons interesting and fun. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The strong ethos of the school develops pupils' spirituality very well and their social awareness is encouraged from the earliest age. They form good relationships with each other and adults and collaborate very well. Pupils have an excellent sense of how to live healthily and act safely. The school council has been very influential in bringing improvements to the school hall and lots more clubs have been introduced. Behaviour is good because staff adopt a consistent approach and are highly skilled at anticipating problems. The school operates in an orderly manner and pupils readily comply with staff guidance. They are fully involved in the wider community, for example, through their strong links with St Anne's Parish and visits of the choir to the local hospital. Through business links they have been instrumental in improving the local area, including a park area within the school grounds and the local reservoir.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Good quality teaching enables pupils to make good progress. Teachers' strong subject knowledge, conscientious planning, and sensitive questioning help pupils to achieve well. Teachers vary activities successfully and ensure that lessons move at a good pace and challenge pupils' thinking. Good pupil management and stimulating classroom environments contribute to the pupil's enjoyment of learning.

Teachers and support assistants work effectively throughout the school to support pupils, especially in the Foundation Stage, Year 1, and in Year 6. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and accurately, and generally use the information well to plan suitable work. However, the usefulness of their written comments in marking varies, providing insufficiently consistent guidance for pupils on how to improve their work.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides an outstanding curriculum in the Foundation Stage with an extensive choice of well-planned activities for the children. The curriculum for the older pupils promotes their academic and personal development well. The school is working on making appropriate links between subjects to ensure learning is as meaningful as possible. Modern technology is being used especially well; for example, to help pupils produce pictorial representations of poems and take digital photographs of their work. Reading skills are promoted well across the curriculum but, whilst writing is addressed well in English lessons, there is scope for this aspect to be promoted more effectively in other subjects. There is good planning to address the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but it is less well developed for higher attaining pupils and those identified as gifted and talented. Pupils say how much they enjoy the good range of visits and visitors; for example, the residential visit for Year 6. Overall, there is a very good range of out of school activities for pupils.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The school takes really good care of its pupils. Pupils trust staff and know who to turn to if they are troubled. They say they feel safe in school, because all the staff deal with any instances of bullying effectively. Arrangements to prepare pupils for transfer to secondary school are very good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their weekly visits to the secondary school's 'Tuesday club'. Parents and carers feel welcome in the school and are strongly encouraged through parents meetings and workshops to be involved in their children's education. Child protection and health and safety procedures are well established and there are good links with outside agencies, which give a range of help to the pupils. Clear strategies are in place for the early identification of pupils who may be in need of additional support. However, systems to track the achievement of

specific groups of pupils, especially higher attainers, are not sharply focused enough to fully support pupils' learning. This is why inspectors grade this aspect of the school's provision as good rather than outstanding as the school suggests.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. In the last two years there have been improvements most notably in teaching and learning and the curriculum. These have been achieved through the determination of senior managers to ensure that foundations for the future are strong. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning has enabled senior managers to form a clear view of the quality of education provided and to establish appropriate priorities for future improvement. They have succeeded in building an enthusiastic team who demonstrate a strong sense of common purpose, a willingness to embrace change and who have high expectations both of themselves and the pupils. Subject coordinators have a growing understanding of their accountability for standards within a subject. The school development plan is appropriate and comprehensive but does not always provide clear criteria against which success can be measured. Resources are well used to raise standards in teaching, learning and the curriculum, and to provide an attractive environment for the children. The school has worked hard to establish highly productive links with parents and the local community. Governors carry out their responsibilities well and are further developing their role as critical friends.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

We visited your school this week to find out how well you are learning. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for being helpful when we asked you questions.

We think there are lots of good things about your school, but we also found out some ways in which your learning could be even better. The things we particularly like are:

- children and staff are very friendly and you get on well with each other
- your school is very attractive with lots of your good work on the walls
- you said you enjoy school because there are lots of interesting things to do
- you are keen to answer in lessons, which helps you make good progress
- the teachers work really hard to make your learning enjoyable
- the school cares for everyone and makes sure you are safe
- the way the staff work as a team to ensure the school continues to develop well.

We have asked the headteacher and the staff to:

- use the information they have about the standards you reach in your work in a 'smarter' way to help you progress even better
- give you more opportunities in subjects other than English, mathematics and science to improve your writing skills
- ensure that the marking of your work is consistently good to show you best how to improve.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. Please share this letter with the other children. We hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make St Anne's Catholic Primary an even better place in the future.