

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108386
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	288084
Inspection date	19 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Mrs. Moira Fitzpatrick

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	188
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joyce Birney
Headteacher	Miss Kathryn Leonard
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2002
School address	off Pickering Green Harlow Green Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE9 7HX
Telephone number	0191 4334053
Fax number	0191 4334054

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The school population is predominantly White British with very few pupils from minority ethnic groups. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average, so too is the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. When children start school in the Reception class their attainments are below what is typical for their age and with particular weaknesses in personal and social development and in communication skills.

The school has been affected by staff turnover in the last three years but the staffing situation has now stabilised.

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 where the impact of high teacher turnover has been managed well in the last two years. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses well and have taken effective action to make improvements. They have been particularly successful in developing the skills of new staff and in extending the role and expertise of the governing body. The time is right for more responsibility to be delegated to staff so that the onerous workload of the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher is reduced. Staff are now well prepared to make a greater contribution to school improvement in developing teaching, learning and the curriculum.

Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards by Year 6. They make good progress because they are well taught and they work hard. Teachers plan well for different ability groups and assess learning regularly so that they can spot any problems quickly. The curriculum is satisfactory and ensures good progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, though facilities for information and communication technology are not adequate for the demands of the curriculum and reduces pupils' progress in this subject. Improvements to the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have led to better progress for these pupils this year. Provision in the Foundation Stage is excellent. Children make excellent progress because their learning is very well tracked and activities are planned, which challenge and excite them and they quickly develop independence. This is because of the many opportunities they have to make choices and decisions.

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well, are caring and supportive of each other and understand the need for tolerance. This supports their good learning in lessons and harmonious play during breaks. They have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and make sensible choices to stay safe. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the wider community and are rightly proud of the contribution they make through the Fair Trade tuck shop. Pupils are well prepared for their future with good basic skills, good levels of confidence and an ability to get on well with each other. They are well cared for by teachers and other staff and feel safe and secure in school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school for the care and quality of learning it provides for their children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' progress in information and communication technology.
- Delegate specific leadership and management roles to staff and develop their leadership and management skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards are above average. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys and girls.

Children join the Reception class with attainment that is below what is expected for their age. They make rapid progress, so that by the end of the year nearly all have reached the goals set for their learning and a number exceed them. Staff build on this excellent progress so that almost all pupils reach the expected level for their age by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing

and mathematics. In the national assessments in 2006, the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected level was very high in reading and above average in mathematics.

Results in the national tests for Year 6 pupils dipped to average in 2006. This was partly the result of the impact of teacher turnover when these pupils were moving through the junior classes. Staffing has now stabilised. The school's response to these disappointing results has been to effectively address some weaknesses in writing. Inspection judges that pupils make good progress in lessons and are on course to meet the challenging targets set for them in English, mathematics and science, which reflect their above average standards in these subjects. Progress in information and communication technology is too slow due to inadequate facilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Children make an excellent start to their personal development in the Reception class. Pupils feel valued and safe in school; they enjoy lessons and work hard to please their teachers. Their attendance is good. Behaviour is good in and out of classrooms and pupils report few incidents of bullying. They are confident that any problems they might have will be dealt with quickly and effectively by teachers. Many pupils mentioned how well the Worry Boxes, organised by the school council, are working. Several commented on how teachers had sorted problems without making them known to others and felt happy about this. Pupils of all ages relish the opportunities they have to make a contribution to the school and the wider community and take their tasks very seriously. The school council, buddies and classroom monitors all play an important part in making the school a secure and happy place and in developing a sense of citizenship in pupils.

Pupils know how to stay safe, eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise because they are taught the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They are well prepared for their future with good basic skills in literacy and numeracy and the ability to work together to support each other.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Despite a high turnover in staff in the last three years, good systems to support learning have been developed, which impact positively on the learning of all groups of pupils. Teachers' planning is thorough and takes good account of pupils' previous learning; so that tasks set provide a good level of challenge for all groups of pupils. Pupils are generally fully involved in their learning through targets that are set at the start of lessons. Occasionally, some pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress in lessons because not all teachers are yet expert in the new systems. In the best lessons, targets are frequently revisited so that pupils make regular checks on how well they are doing. Relationships are very good. Teachers create a strong feeling of security for pupils who respond with confidence to challenging questions, giving good support to each other and working hard to meet the lesson targets that are set for them.

The teaching of younger pupils takes very good account of their stage of development. They have regular opportunities to continue to learn through play, which develops their self-confidence and independence. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are excellent

because of the meticulous planning, which is based on a very sharp knowledge of the children's development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are some good features as a result of improvements made. Provision for the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is developing well as teachers' planning takes good account of these in all subjects. However, the provision for the development of information and communication technology skills is hampered by inadequate facilities. The school rightly has improvements to these as a priority for this year. There have been good developments to curriculum provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities this year. More effective planning by teachers ensures that pupils are working towards their individual targets more consistently in class and are reaching their targets more quickly because of this.

The curriculum is well enhanced by visits and visitors. There is a good range of after school clubs that are well supported by pupils. Links with the parish, the wider community and the local secondary school all contribute to enriching pupils' learning and extending their interests. Curriculum provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Developments here to improve boys' writing have been very successful and illustrate how alert staff are to the specific needs of individuals and groups of children.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school's pastoral care and support for pupils' personal development are good. The vast majority of parents agree that their children are well cared for and happy in school. Effective arrangements for safeguarding pupils, child protection and risk assessment are in place and used by staff. Children feel safe in school. As one said, 'Our teachers are always there to help.'

Guidance for pupils' academic development is good and improving as less experienced staff develop their expertise. Teachers' marking is becoming more effective in helping pupils to improve their work and take more responsibility for their learning, though there are some inconsistencies in quality across the school. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly spotted and they are well supported in their learning by the skilled work of classroom assistants and the careful planning of teachers. Parents' questionnaire responses were very positive, with the vast majority of parents showing a high level of confidence in the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher gives good direction and support to develop school evaluation skills in all staff. The headteacher, ably supported by the acting deputy headteacher, has overcome the difficulties created by high staff turnover to create a shared sense of purpose among staff and governors. As a result, there is a clear focus on raising standards. All teachers, including the least experienced, have a good understanding of their central role in identifying weaknesses and supporting improvement in standards and provision.

It is now appropriate that some responsibilities that have been carried by the headteacher and deputy headteacher are delegated to new staff. The school's self-evaluation is accurate in identifying the most important areas for improvement; actions taken this year to improve the assessment of pupils' learning and their writing skills have been successful.

The role of governors has developed well since the last inspection. Recent changes to the governing body and an emphasis on training have allowed governors to gain a much better understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They monitor the work of the school well and make good use of this knowledge to support the school's strategic development. The school has improved well since the last inspection and has a good capacity for further improvement.

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Annex A

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	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

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Annex A

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

20th April 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Tyne and Wear, NE9 7HX

I enjoyed my recent visit to your school, which you made very pleasant by your friendly welcome and good manners. I was able to find out a lot of things about your school because you were so helpful. Thank you for that.

I think you all deserve a pat on the back for working so hard to help make your school a good one. It was interesting to see how well you behave, how you help each other in lessons and play so well together outside. These things make a big difference to how well you learn, because when you are happy you feel good and can learn easily. You told me that your teachers know you well and are always there to help you. I agree; they work hard to make sure that you are doing well and they keep an eye out for when you might need some help or extra support. Some of you told me that you thought that work with computers could be better and I agree. I think this is an area that the school can improve in the near future. You may have more of your teachers visiting your classrooms in future to talk to you about your work to see where even more improvements can be made.

Your school helps you to develop many good personal qualities, which prepare you well for the future. The work of the school council and buddies helps make the school better for everyone. So too does the work that you all do in your classrooms to keep them tidy and well organised. You all make a good contribution to your happy, calm school. Keep up all of this good work. It makes your parents and teachers very proud of you and your good school.

Thank you again for making my visit such a happy one and all good wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

Inspector