



St Anne's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108843
Local Authority Sunderland
Inspection number 288205
Inspection dates 11–12 January 2007
Reporting inspector Penny Parrish

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hylton Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Pennywell, Sunderland
Age range of pupils	4–11		Tyne and Wear, SR4 9AA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 5536860
Number on roll (school)	208	Fax number	0191 553 6862
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Barbara Cassidy
		Headteacher	Mrs Christine Lynch
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Anne's is an average-sized school that serves the Catholic community in Pennywell, a suburb of Sunderland. The locality has much higher than average levels of social and economic disadvantage. An above average number of pupils is entitled to free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage and all have English as their home language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's own judgement that St Anne's is a satisfactory school with some good features. Parents express strong support for the school and praise the good care and attention their children receive. One parent describes staff as, 'Very caring and attentive to the children's needs'; and another as, 'Very friendly and approachable, always happy to help.' The school provides well for the pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils enjoy attending school, behave well and develop good attitudes to learning. They are confident that adults are always available to help when necessary. They have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. The school council manages improvements suggested by pupils, such as the introduction of the seating area known as the 'friendship spot'. Links with the wider community involve pupils in extra educational activities that extend their opportunities for learning well.

Standards are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Attainment is below average for most children as they start school but because provision is good in the Reception class, they make good progress, achieve well and most reach the early learning goals set nationally for the end of the Reception year. This good start slows as the children move through the school and, although the school's data shows progress varies from year to year, achievement and progress is satisfactory, overall. Boys do not generally achieve as well as girls, especially in writing and mathematics. The higher attaining pupils could achieve more overall.

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good. They are satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 6, with more that could be done to focus teaching more tightly on pupils' differing learning needs; for example by providing a greater challenge for the more able. Work is marked regularly but there is insufficient guidance given to pupils as to how they can improve their work. In good lessons, pupils learn a lot because they have interesting work taught by enthusiastic teachers.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and staff are well motivated and keen to move the school forward; they speak of 'never standing still' in their practice. Since the last inspection, sound improvements have been made, such as making the curriculum in reading more interesting for boys and improving the school's provision for information and communication technology. Over the past two years, systems for checking the school's provision and outcomes have expanded well. They are not yet sufficiently rigorous and well-focused to ensure consistent improvement in pupils' achievement, in raising standards and in extending good practice throughout the school. Governors are proud of the school, dedicated to supporting staff and children but sometimes accept too readily the school's account of its outcomes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the attainment of boys in writing and mathematics.

- Improve planning for teaching and learning to provide a greater challenge for more able pupils.
- Link assessment and marking systems more closely to the development of specific skills to enable pupils to be clear about how they can improve their work.
- Apply a clear focus and more rigour to self-evaluation systems and to the tracking of the outcomes of plans for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily from their below average start on entry to Reception through to their leaving the school at the end of Year 6. They make good progress in the Foundation stage and satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. By the end of Reception, the early learning goals set nationally are met by most children. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average. Results in Year 2 in the national tests in 2005 and 2006 showed a declining trend when compared to the average and above results of previous years. There are signs of improvement this year.

In Year 6, targets were met in English but not fully achieved in mathematics. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained at average and sometimes above in English, and broadly average in science. Standards have fluctuated in mathematics but improved to just above the national average in 2005, following a focus on development with support from the local authority. The inspection confirms that standards are about average by the end of Year 6, but could be higher for some of the boys and the more able pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. The school's open and friendly atmosphere helps pupils to develop an easy confidence and respect for themselves and others. Parents and pupils readily agree that they enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above the national average. Data for individual pupils shows a rapid upturn in attendance for some pupils new to the school, reflecting the school's success in re-engaging pupils in their learning.

The school's keen sense of its Catholic values ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour is consistently very good. Pupils cooperate well, for example, with 'talking partners' on a daily basis in lessons. Older pupils help younger ones to settle into school and pupils can be found at playtimes in the 'friends' seating area. A good range of curriculum enrichment activities mean that pupils' cultural development is secure. Pupils' awareness of other cultures is satisfactorily developed through subjects such as religious education and geography.

Pupils have good opportunities to contribute well to the school community. In addition to a good range of day-to-day responsibilities, some act as class representatives on the school council. Older pupils become office monitors at lunchtime, a task they take

on confidently and well. Although pupils are prepared well from a personal and social viewpoint for the next stage in their education, the development of their basic skills in literacy and numeracy could be better for some of the boys and the more able pupils, leading to a satisfactory judgement overall for preparation for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Relationships are good. Pupils are managed well, are happy and generally enjoy their work. Learning assistants are suitably briefed and support learning well, especially for lower attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties, to ensure satisfactory learning for all. When pupils are engaged particularly well by the enthusiasm of the teacher within an interesting task, learning is sometimes good. Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage where the staff have a good understanding of the age group, and find out in detail what the children know and need to know. In other classes, although lessons are sometimes good, systems for assessment are in the early stages of branching out from identifying national levels of attainment to highlighting specific skills achieved and what still needs to be learned. This means that planning is not generally tailored well enough to provide for the differing needs of individuals or groups. Not enough is expected of the higher attaining pupils. Although much has been done since the last inspection to make reading more interesting for boys, the progress of boys compared to girls is not tracked well enough and there are significant gender differences in attainment in writing and in mathematics especially. Marking could do more to highlight pupils' strengths and to track the areas of learning identified for development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Although provision is good for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils' personal development, it is less effective in ensuring the academic development of the more able pupils and of boys in writing and mathematics. A good range of enrichment activities is provided that promote pupils' creative and sporting skills well, and give pupils the opportunity to learn elementary French. The school has successfully attained 'Activemark' status in recognition of its provision for promoting sporting activities. The recent introduction of occasional themed weeks has proved popular and successful, with work in several subjects contributing to the pupils' learning. The most appealing experiences have been undertaken in partnership with artists and other specialists. Pupils visited the workshops of the National Glass Centre, for example, and promoted their artistic and design skills through planning and making their own glass tiles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory with strengths in the support for pupils' personal development. Parents are accurate in their view that the school is very caring. Procedures for promoting pupils' health and safety and child protection are in place and comply with statutory requirements. Pupils say they feel safe at school and know they can easily access an adult for help. The more vulnerable pupils are supported well. The regular involvement of a school counsellor has a positive impact on the personal development and guidance provided to individual pupils. Productive links with other agencies help the new coordinator for pupils with learning difficulties to ensure that satisfactory progress is made. The support for pupils' academic progress is satisfactory. Recently forged links with other local primary schools are introducing new ideas, and systems are under development. Class targets are well established for literacy and numeracy but the literacy targets are too general to be fully useful in guiding pupils' learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. A cohesive staff team shows a strong determination to improve provision for the pupils and the school is aware of what needs to be done. However, ambitions and plans have not yet resulted in improved outcomes for children. A recently developed system for tracking pupils' progress year-on-year provides valuable information but this is not being analysed with sufficient rigour to provide a clear focus for further assessment and improvement. A clear programme is established for checking the quality of teaching and learning in lessons but the focus is too general and information gained is not followed up with sufficient rigour to keep improvements moving along at a good pace. Recently established arrangements for professional partnership with other schools are helping to broaden the school's view of self-evaluation and how to bring about change. Nonetheless, improvements since the last inspection show the school has a sound capacity for further improvement. The governing body provides a sound, loyal and positive force for continuous improvement and is becoming more pro-active, for example, in taking forward the school's ambition to provide nursery education.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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	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	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

St Anne's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Hylton Road

Pennywell

Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR4 9AA

15 January 2007

Dear Children

Thank you for making us so welcome on our recent visit to your school, for being so polite, answering all our questions and for telling us so much about why you like St Anne's.

Some of the things we particularly like about your school are:

- how well-behaved you are in lessons and around the school
- how happy you all seem to be and how confident you are that you can get any help you may need
- the interesting activities staff organise for you outside lesson time
- how friendly, cheerful and helpful all the staff are.

We have asked your headteacher and governors to do these things to make your school even better: to check more precisely what you know and can do so the teachers understand even better what you need to learn next; to expect more of the more able children and to help the boys especially to do better in writing and mathematics.

We wish every one of you well for the future and hope that you will always work as hard and enjoy school as much as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Penny Parrish

Lead inspector