



St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 117495
Local Authority HERTFORDSHIRE
Inspection number 290855
Inspection date 8 November 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Cosway

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Croxley View
School category	Voluntary aided		Watford
Age range of pupils	3–11		Hertfordshire WD18 6BW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01923226987
Number on roll (school)	251	Fax number	01923234645
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Dr D Callaghan
		Headteacher	Mrs P Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	15 April 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St. Anthony's Catholic Primary is an average sized primary school serving the west of Watford. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, but there are significant numbers from Asian, Eastern European, mixed and Black African backgrounds. Almost a third of pupils speak English as an additional language. Most children start school with levels of knowledge and understanding that are below and sometimes well below those expected for their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is also above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St. Anthony's Primary is an outstanding school. Its motto is 'We Grow and Learn with Jesus', and this sums up many of its strengths. Pupils grow in their learning, their confidence and their sense of responsibility, as well as spiritually. They learn in an ethos in which all are valued, guided and supported, so that over their whole time in the school they make outstanding progress. The school has a very special, close family atmosphere. Pupils call their teachers by their first names and look after each other in class and out. The pupils love and respect their teachers and they are loved and respected in return.

The many outstanding features include the care, support and guidance for pupils, the teaching, the leadership of the school and pupils' personal development, especially their spiritual development. The school succeeds because it is a place where pupils feel very secure and happy. They enjoy their lessons whilst being challenged to give of their best. They love coming to school and say that they feel part of a team. One girl said that if anything needed to improve it would be up to the pupils to help, 'Because everyone helps each other here.'

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage because of the good provision. Many children reach the standards expected by the time they begin Year 1. The teaching is well planned and there is considerable support for the many that need it. The Reception classroom is not large enough and the outside space is inadequate. The school is aware of this and work has begun on a new building.

At the end of Year 2 standards are average. As pupils' confidence in literacy and numeracy grows, excellent teaching helps them to build on the good foundations laid in the early years. Their rate of progress accelerates between Years 2 and 6. In the 2006 tests, Year 6 pupils reached above average standards in mathematics and well above average standards in English and science. The school exceeded its targets in 2006 in English and came close to meeting them in mathematics, even though eight pupils joined the school, most with English as an additional language, late in the year. Pupils' overall progress in mathematics was excellent, even though the test results were lower than in English and science because pupils began from a lower starting point. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make outstanding progress because of the excellent help and support they receive.

Almost all parents responded to the questionnaire and their comments were overwhelmingly positive. 'The school has extremely high standards,' wrote one parent and many commented on pupils' self discipline and respect for others. They rightly praised the teaching. Lessons are very well planned, work meets the needs of pupils of differing abilities and relationships in classes are excellent. Pupils value their lessons and try very hard to do well. They said that their teachers make learning fun and are very helpful. They are full of praise for all that the school does for them. The curriculum is good, with a proper emphasis on basic skills and excellent provision for teaching

music and physical education. Pupils' appreciation of world cultures is not as well developed.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils learn to take responsibility, make decisions and run mini enterprise schemes to raise funds for projects they have initiated. They contribute very effectively to the school community through the school council and contribute greatly to the local community through improvements they make to the area around the school. They also learn how to stay healthy and safe exceptionally well.

Excellent leadership and management have brought about significant progress since the last inspection and there is a clear focus on raising attainment further. The school has an excellent capacity for continued improvement and provides outstanding value for money because of the high quality all round education that pupils enjoy.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the indoor and outdoor accommodation for Reception children.
- Develop the curriculum by increasing cross-curricular links between subjects and extending pupils' appreciation of the rich and varied cultures in the world in which we live.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Test results and inspection evidence show that pupils' achievement is outstanding. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and many reach the standards expected by the time they begin Year 1. By the end of Year 2, results are in line with national averages. In the national tests at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, results over the last three years have been above or well above average. Pupils' progress and achievement have been consistently high. Pupils are confident when making calculations and solving problems in mathematics and their reading and writing skills are also very well developed. When speaking, they answer questions thoughtfully and articulately.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils really enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. Staff are very good role models and treat pupils with great respect. Consequently, almost all pupils behave extremely well. They are confident, polite and considerate. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding overall, although their understanding of other cultures is less well developed than other aspects. Pupils are very keen to face new challenges. They work hard and demonstrate mature attitudes. Pupils respond exceptionally well to opportunities to make decisions and their views are taken seriously and are acted upon. They have outstanding work skills which will be valuable in the future, developed through excellent teaching of literacy, numeracy

and information and communication technology. Pupils also work together exceptionally well in teams.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teachers plan lessons most thoughtfully and there are clear targets for pupils to reach. Pupils concentrate and work hard because the lessons are interesting and enjoyable. Teachers' high expectations and the pace in the outstanding lessons mean that pupils learn quickly and make excellent progress. The management of pupils is excellent and relationships are very good indeed. The work is pitched at many levels so that all pupils are both challenged and supported in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to use their skills in reading, writing and number in different subjects. Hence pupils make exceptional progress. There is a particular focus on physical activities to ensure that pupils are healthy and fit. Very good provision for teaching physical education, French and music deepens and broadens pupils' knowledge. The school provides a good range of enrichment and extra curricular activities. Teachers have begun to find ways to link subjects to give greater relevance to the curriculum, for example, by teaching about the Second World War through history, geography and English. This is successful, but it is not done frequently enough. There is a limited range of opportunities for pupils to appreciate the many cultures in the modern world.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The outstanding care, guidance and support lead to pupils feeling happy and safe, and pupils are confident that there is no bullying or racial discrimination. They know that any incidents will be dealt with firmly. Close attention is given to health and safety issues. Child protection arrangements fully meet requirements. Teachers and support staff are sensitive to the needs of all individuals. Adults provide pupils with much thoughtful help and guidance in lessons and pupils know their targets well and how they can improve. The care and support for pupils with learning difficulties is outstanding. Parents were almost unanimous in their praise for the school and the care it gives their children.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Excellent leadership and management have brought about very significant improvements in the effectiveness of the school. The school's analysis of its own performance is of excellent quality and has led to well planned changes in provision to bring about further improvement in, for example, pupils' standards and progress. All teachers share an extensive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and take a full part in the process of school improvement planning and review. The procedures for professional development and performance are excellent. The school has flourishing partnerships with other organisations, for example, that help meet the needs of groups of pupils.

The governing body's support and monitoring of the school are excellent. They have been responsible for major improvements in accommodation and safety and in overseeing the excellent progress pupils make.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

9 November 2006

Dear Pupils

St. Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Croxley View, Watford, Hertfordshire, WD18 6BW

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful to me when I visited your school. I enjoyed sharing your lessons and talking to you. You all told me how much you love your school and I agree with you that it is an outstanding school. There are many excellent things about it. You said that everyone is friendly and helps each other. This is one of the reasons that you are so happy and doing so well at school. I was impressed with the confidence you show and how helpful you are to each other. I enjoyed the infants' assembly. You were very well behaved and there was a real sense of a very special occasion, as you applauded those who had done well and joined in prayers. Other good things about your school include:

- you work hard in lessons and behaviour is outstanding
- you do very well in the tests that you take, reaching high standards in your reading, writing, mathematics and science by the time you leave Year 6
- your headteacher and senior teachers have excellent ideas about ways to improve the school
- you are set clear targets and are helped to achieve them
- teachers make lessons enjoyable
- teachers, teaching assistants and all adults care for you very well indeed
- you are helped to be healthy and safe

I have asked your school try to make things even better. The most important things are to:

- improve the space for Reception children so that they have room to work and play both indoors and out
- link subjects together within interesting topics to make your work even more interesting and include more about the rich and varied cultures around the world.

Keep working hard and make the most of your time at this very special school.

Yours sincerely

Paul Cosway

(Lead inspector)