



St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 124371
Local Authority Staffordshire
Inspection number 292976
Inspection dates 12–13 September 2006
Reporting inspector David Driscoll

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lynton Avenue
School category	Voluntary aided		Weeping Cross
Age range of pupils	3–11		Stafford ST17 0EA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01785 663128
Number on roll (school)	224	Fax number	01785 662987
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Geoff Owen
		Headteacher	Justine Lomas
Date of previous school inspection	11 June 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	12–13 September 2006	292976

Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

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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 primary school. Children come from a very wide area because their parents want them to have an education that is founded in the Catholic faith. Most pupils come from a relatively advantaged background and almost all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the school as a whole is low, but varies significantly between year groups. In some years, the proportion of pupils joining the school other than at the usual time has been exceptionally high. The school has gone through a period of change over the past three years, which included a time without a permanent headteacher, the absence of key members of staff and the opening of a new nursery.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Anne's provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The lack of a stable senior management team in recent years led to the school falling behind others in important areas, but the past year has seen significant improvements under a new leadership team who have a clear idea of the priorities for improvement and what needs to be done about them. Significant progress has been made on improving academic standards, but further work remains to be done in other important areas. These areas are already in the school's new action plan. Pupils leave the school with above average standards, having made satisfactory progress. Pupils usually arrive at the school with standards that are above average. They make a good start in the Nursery, especially in their personal development. Previously, progress in the Reception class had been too slow, so standards fell to below average, although there were also concerns about the accuracy of the assessments. Since September 2005, however, provision has improved, so pupils now finish the Foundation Stage with above average standards having made satisfactory progress. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in their academic work, and in the skills needed for later life, as they move through the school. Progress in reading is particularly good. Progress in writing on the other hand is still relatively weak, despite the big improvements made over the last year. It is the boys' progress in writing that causes the most concern. A minority are simply not excited by some of the topics and so do not develop an enjoyment of writing. Teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory. Lessons usually get off to a good start and all pupils are clear about what they have to do. Lessons also have good endings, where the teacher gets a clear idea of how much has been learnt. In between though, tasks can be a bit boring and the work sometimes too easy for the most able. As a result, some more able boys in particular will allow their attention to wander and start to misbehave. The lack of challenge in lessons is partly because the school's systems for assessing pupils are in their infancy, especially in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, where subject co-ordinators do not have a clear idea of the progress being made by pupils. The progress that pupils make in their personal development is satisfactory. Pupils respond well to the good quality care they receive, so their social and moral development is good. The work in personal education ensures pupils develop a good understanding of how to live a healthy and safe life. The school puts its Catholic ethos of promoting 'trust, respect and love' into practice every day, so the pupils develop well spiritually. However, the school's leaders, including governors, have not got to grips with the falling attendance, which is now only satisfactory. The profile of good attendance is not being raised sufficiently with either parents or pupils. Similarly, the work on providing more motivating lessons is not completely successful in ensuring that pupils' enjoyment, attitudes and behaviour are raised above a satisfactory level. Academic guidance is weaker than pastoral care. The tracking of pupils' progress has only recently started in English, mathematics and science. This is used to target groups of pupils, but these are lower attainers, rather than those who may be falling behind in their work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make topics for writing, and lessons in general, more interesting, especially for more able boys.
- Ensure parents and pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance.
- Improve the role of middle managers, especially in the way they assess and track pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils join and leave the school with above average standards, having made satisfactory progress. They make good progress in the Nursery, particularly in developing their personal skills, and satisfactory progress in the rest of the school. Progress in reading is good, but pupils have not made enough progress in writing in the past. Over the last 12 months, the school has managed to improve standards of writing to the extent that pupils now make satisfactory progress. Nevertheless, more able boys in particular could still do better.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils are enthusiastic about school but many would like lessons to be more interesting. Their attendance has fallen, mainly due to family holidays, and is now average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships are good so pupils feel secure and valued. Most pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and behave well. A minority behave inappropriately when in the playground or when they lose interest in lessons. Their spiritual development is such that they will regularly reflect on what they experience and link it to their faith. However, their understanding of life in a multi-ethnic society is limited. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to community initiatives, although strong links with the parish allow them to take an active part in the local church community. Pupils are safety conscious and understand well the importance of healthy eating and exercise. They are keen to take on additional responsibilities such as special friends and the progress they make in the skills necessary for later life is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons get off to a good start, and finish well, but the main tasks lead to progress that is only satisfactory. Teachers make clear exactly what is to be learnt and what pupils will be doing, so there is no confusion and pupils settle quickly to their work. Some of the tasks that pupils are then asked to do fail to interest them, so they lose

concentration and, in the worse cases, start to misbehave. Partly this is because the task has not been thought through well enough. Boys in one class did not want to write about being a princess, for example, but in another got quite excited writing about a spooky castle. Another reason lies with inadequate assessment of subjects other than English, mathematics and science. In some cases, teachers are unsure of the standards or progress of individuals, so work set is not always hard enough for the most able. However, teachers do get a good idea of what has been learnt in lessons, through the thorough reviews at the end.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Additional time has been allocated to literacy lessons resulting in rapidly improving standards in writing and reading. However, a minority of boys do not find the topics they are asked to write particularly inspiring, which slows their progress; furthermore, the curriculum does not always provide sufficient challenge for the most able, so they lose concentration. The Foundation Stage curriculum places much importance on learning good work habits from an early age enabling young children to develop very good interpersonal skills. A significant amount of time is given to sport and health education, placing good emphasis on healthy eating and keeping fit. A wide range of after school clubs enriches provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils are valued and receive good levels of care. They feel safe and able to share problems, saying that any bullying is quickly sorted out. Child protection procedures are good. Those with learning difficulties receive effective support and achieve in line with their peers. Their support assistants are conscientious and caring but are not always aware of pupils' individual targets. There are good arrangements for settling children in the Foundation Stage, enabling them to make a good start to their education. Well thought out procedures support Year 6 pupils effectively on transfer to secondary school. Procedures to improve attendance are insufficiently rigorous to halt the decline in recent years. Pupils receive insufficient guidance about how to improve their work over time. Tracking systems now identify broad trends in pupils' standards and achievements. However, they do not check the progress of groups such as those entering later from other schools. This means the school is unaware of any differences there may be in their achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The strengths of the headteacher and senior managers have enabled the school to make significant progress over the past year in terms of improving academic standards and provision in the Reception class. Careful monitoring of teaching and analysing of data have pinpointed where their

priorities should lie. Plans to tackle such weaknesses have been successful. They doubled the proportion of pupils in Year 2 reaching Level 3 in writing, for example, and improved standards in Reception from below to above average. Standards in Year 2 had previously fallen to average, but have improved this year to above average. Nevertheless, these effective aspects of monitoring and evaluation are offset by weaknesses in other areas, so the capacity to improve is only satisfactory. Attendance has continued to decline and the role of subject coordinators is particularly weak. Historically, they have played little or no part in monitoring the work of the school or standards outside of English, mathematics and science, which leaves teachers unsure of their pupils' capabilities. All these weaknesses have been identified in the school development plan.

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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	3
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	2
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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

Many thanks for helping us when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed ourselves a lot and Mrs Clarke thought that the school council was great. Your school does some things well, and could do better in some others. Overall it is giving you a satisfactory education, although the Nursery is good. You learn to read quickly, but you could do better in your writing. The starts and ends of lessons are really good. Some of you told us that the middle bits of lessons can be a bit boring, so we have asked the teachers to make them more exciting, especially for the boys when they are learning to write. Some of the really clever ones among you do not always get hard enough work. So, we have asked the people in charge to make sure all of the adults who help you get a good idea of how well you are doing so they can give you work that is just right for you. Your teachers take good care of you. We were very impressed by how you think about other people and the way you know what is right and what is wrong. In many ways you become more grown up as you move through the school. However, the number of you who are coming to school every day is falling. We have asked Mrs Lomas to explain to you and your mums and dads how important this is. You could help here by telling your mums and dads how difficult it is to catch up on work you have missed and asking them to take their holidays when you have yours. There are now signs that your school is getting better and better, although there is still lots to do. We hope you enjoy yourselves even more over the coming years and thank you again for your help.