

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105088
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	298530
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Ian Thompson

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Louise Evans
Headteacher	Mr T McBeath
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2006
School address	Highfield South Rock Ferry Birkenhead Merseyside CH42 4NE
Telephone number	0151 6453682
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average size school serves an urban area which includes pockets of severe social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school has gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark and is a Health Promoting School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education and satisfactory value for money. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. The school has improved considerably since the last inspection, for example, in its provision in the Foundation Stage, the quality of teaching and learning and in management of the school.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children enter the Foundation stage with skills below those expected and, for many, they are well below, particularly in communication and social skills. Nearly all make good progress to reach the standards expected for their age in personal and social development and are well prepared for their later school life. Progress in other areas, such as literacy and numeracy, is not as rapid but nevertheless is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average and improving overall but are not as high as they should be in mathematics. In part, this is due to the legacy of the severe staffing disruptions that affected these pupils' learning in their earlier years. The school's leadership has resolved the staffing difficulties. There is now a stable staff, united in their focus on improving the school. This is beginning to have a positive impact on standards and achievement throughout the school. In Key Stage 1, there are no significant differences in the performance of different groups of pupils. However, in Key Stage 2, girls do not achieve as well as they could.

Pupils make good progress in their personal development as they move through the school. They are well aware of how to stay safe and of the principles of healthy living. Useful daily opportunities for pupils to reflect on their work and behaviour are provided. These enable pupils to consider what they have achieved, develop self-confidence and understand the school's expectations of their behaviour. Behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils generally behave well and get on with each other. Responsibilities are accepted eagerly and a key feature of breaktimes and lunchtimes is the way that older pupils look after the younger ones, for example, acting as play leaders. Pupils are aware of the needs of others as they show through their charity fund raising and contributions to the community. The award of a Basic Skills Quality Mark recognises the school's efforts to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy so that they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some developing good features. Much has been done by the school's management to improve teaching since the last inspection. In particular, better planning based on accurate assessment is beginning to improve standards. Whilst learning targets are now set for pupils, teachers' marking of pupils' work is too variable in explaining to pupils how successful they are in achieving their targets.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. A turnaround in the school has been managed effectively since the last inspection and a platform for further improvement has been established. Consequently, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics.
- Improve the achievement of girls in Key Stage 2.
- Improve pupils' learning by making sure all teachers give clear information on how to improve when marking their work.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory but with areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Improved progress in the Foundation Stage has yet to feed through into raised standards and achievement in the rest of the school. Nevertheless, achievement in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory. By the end of Year 6 standards are broadly average overall, higher in English than in mathematics and science. This reflects the school's successful focus on improving English. While provisional results in the 2007 national tests show that improvement in English has been sustained, this has not been matched in mathematics where, although there was a slight improvement on the previous year, targets were missed. All groups of pupils make similarly satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. However, girls do not always achieve as well as they should in Key Stage 2 where, in lessons, they do not volunteer answers as readily as the boys.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in their personal development throughout the school, especially in their social skills. They have a good knowledge of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle; the school is designated a Health Promoting School and has achieved the Activemark award for its promotion of physical activities. The great majority enjoy their learning and say that the school 'helps us to learn for when we grow up'. They appreciate the wide range of additional sporting activities available to them. Behaviour overall is satisfactory, but the behaviour of a small minority of boys slips on occasions. Attendance overall is satisfactory. It has, however, declined from the previous year due to the greater absence of the small number of pupils who have joined the school following difficulties in their education elsewhere.

Pupils feel very safe in school and say that, while they know who to turn to if they have a problem, this is rarely necessary. Pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is good overall, with cultural awareness developing well through links with other faiths and cultures and visiting multicultural music and drama groups. Money is raised for local and national charities using the pupils' ideas. Pupils eagerly take on special responsibilities such as 'telephonists', 'librarians' and 'play leaders', which provide opportunities to develop responsible attitudes in preparation for adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory and promotes satisfactory progress. There is evident improvement across the school as a result of measures put in place by the school's leadership with the support of the local authority. Lessons are generally effectively planned and draw well on teachers' good subject knowledge. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning. Teaching assistants are involved in planning so that they are able to provide support for pupils who find learning difficult, enabling them to make similar progress to their classmates. Assessment and target setting are beginning to be used well and to have an impact on progress. However, although marking is unfailingly supportive, teachers do not consistently tell pupils

how to improve their work. It is not always clear that checks are made to ensure that pupils follow advice when it is given. On occasions, teachers give boys more attention in lessons to the detriment of girls' progress. Over-direction of work by teachers in some lessons also slows the pace and affects the quality of pupils' independent work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets requirements and makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' progress and personal development. A diligent approach to raising standards in English has resulted in further improvements in the curriculum. Similar progress in mathematics has not been achieved, partly because it has not been given the same high priority as English. There is a growing range of additional sporting and creative activities, supported by good partnerships with local high schools. The Foundation Stage makes much improved provision for all areas of learning and now provides a stimulating and challenging environment in which children make good progress in social learning. However, the outdoor area is too small to provide effectively for the number of children who use it. Residential trips and visits to museums, art galleries and country parks bring the curriculum to life for pupils. Arrangements for transition between the different phases of learning work well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's welcoming atmosphere and the good level of concern for individuals by the staff mean that pupils feel safe and valued. Vulnerable pupils, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are well supported. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place and health and safety matters are dealt with effectively. Teaching assistants support the work of the whole class while providing sensitive, targeted support for pupils who find learning difficult. The school has made good progress in improving its assessment and guidance for pupils, so that they know what they need to learn next. Pupils respond well to the regular confidence-building opportunities to reflect on what they have achieved. Parents appreciate the work the school does to promote their children's learning and well-being.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's leadership has made considerable strides in dealing with the issues from the last inspection. Parents' comments show that the school has retained their support through a difficult time. Although the measures put in place have yet to have a full effect, initiatives are paying off - achievement has improved. A principal factor in improvement has been the restructuring of staff into curriculum teams. This has not only led to greater accountability for performance but has also increased the involvement of all teachers in planning. Staff are united, with high morale and a shared determination to bring about improvement. The school's leadership has made good use of local authority support linked to training and professional development to turn the school around. Monitoring gives a clear and accurate picture which matches inspection findings of how matters stand in the school and what remains to be done. Governors are well informed about the school's performance and support the school well. They are developing an understanding of their role in managing improvement and are able to hold the school appropriately to account for its performance.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
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	2
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	3
The attendance of learners	3
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?	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?	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

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. Thanks particularly to those of you who spoke to us about your life in the school and helped us with our work. It was a pleasure to meet you; you are a credit to your school, your parents and, of course, yourselves.

We think that yours is an improving school, which provides a satisfactory standard of education. You enjoy being in the school and feel safe. It was good to see how many of you take on responsibilities - particularly how well older pupils look after the younger ones. You told us that you feel well cared for and that there is always someone to talk to if you are troubled. Most of you get on well together and behave well but there are times in lessons when a few boys do not behave well enough. You make satisfactory progress through the school, although some girls do not do as well as they should. Standards, particularly in English, are improving. However, standards in mathematics are still not good enough. The curriculum is satisfactory and you told us how much you enjoy the extra activities that are provided for you.

We have asked your teachers to do three things to make your learning even better. First, to find ways of raising standards in mathematics as they have already done in English. Second, to make sure that all girls do as well as they should. Finally, to make sure that all marking of your work tells you how to improve.

Thank you again for helping to make our visit enjoyable. We wish you well for the future.