

# St Anthony's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104103
<b>Local Authority</b>	Solihull
<b>Inspection number</b>	308513
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Driscoll

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	228
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Angela Moseley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Eileen Carey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 February 2004
<b>School address</b>	Fordbridge Road Kingshurst Birmingham B37 6LW
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 7703168
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 7880911

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized primary school serves an urban area on the edge of Birmingham. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic background is above average, although almost all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very high, the great majority of whom have behavioural, emotional or learning difficulties.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. Teaching, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support that pupils receive are all of good quality. These all lead to good personal development. The school is very good at putting its Catholic ethos of valuing and caring for all into practice. This rubs off on the pupils themselves, and shows in their outstanding spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural development is satisfactory because pupils have relatively few opportunities to learn about the different cultures represented in today's Britain. Pupils are very happy at school because they get on well with adults and have many friends. They enjoy lessons because teachers make them fun, although on a few occasions the pace slows when pupils are inactive for too long. Pastoral care is outstanding. A relatively high proportion of pupils have emotional or behavioural difficulties. They are supported exceptionally well and learn to play their part within the school community. Their behaviour is much improved, to the extent that exclusion is a very rare occurrence.

Academic progress is good, and improving. Standards on entry vary from year to year, but the usual pattern is for pupils to join with standards that are below average and leave with average standards. Within this pattern, there are variations in achievement. For example, the school's good tracking systems show that pupils make satisfactory progress in one year, and outstanding progress in another. This is partly as a result of variations in teaching, which ranges from satisfactory to outstanding, but also because the academic guidance that pupils receive varies from class to class. Despite these variations, there are clear signs of improvement across the school. The good leadership and management show no complacency and are tenacious in tackling areas of weakness. The good systems for evaluating the school's effectiveness provide a clear and accurate picture of the school's performance. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good, with higher standards, better achievement and much improved attendance. This track record provides convincing evidence of the school's leaders' good capacity to take the school even further. Parents are very happy with the school, partly because staff are so welcoming. Consequently, a very high proportion of parents volunteer to help in school. This also helps them to help their own children at home. As one parent put it, 'If the headteacher asked, we would all turn up. That's how much we feel part of the school.'

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children usually enter the Nursery with skills and capabilities below those expected for their age, particularly in language and communication skills. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception so standards are average in most areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. This represents a significant improvement on recent years. The good leadership and management have improved the quality of teaching by ensuring teachers' planning is based upon accurate assessments.

Children behave well and respond with enjoyment to the learning environment. This provides them with a variety of stimulating learning opportunities and a good balance between adult led and child initiated play. Children can sometimes become restless when they spend too long listening, rather than doing, especially at the start of lessons when the pace can be a bit slow. Children are friendly and cooperate well with adults and each other. Adults are sensitive to children's needs and support their personal development in many ways. They work together as a team and support each other well. This is shown in their good communication with each

other, which is used to share the results of accurate assessments in order to support children's achievement. Staff also work very well with parents, providing a smooth start to the life of the school and good transition to Year 1.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Provide pupils with more opportunities to learn about the range of different cultures represented in Britain.
- Eliminate the inconsistencies in teaching and academic guidance in order to improve progress in every year to that of the best.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards have improved significantly since the school was last inspected, as pupils make better progress. Standards in Year 2, for example, have improved from below average to average as have the overall test results for Year 6. In 2007, these were average but masked a big difference between subjects, with results in mathematics and science being much lower than those in English. This year, as a result of actions taken by the school's leaders, analysis of data shows that standards in mathematics and science are average and pupils' achievement is equally as good in all three subjects. Although pupils make good progress through the school, there are variations from class to class. Pupils currently in Year 6, for example, got off to a relatively slow start earlier in their schooling, but then made excellent progress in Year 6. Progress in information and communication technology (ICT), which was not good enough at the time of the previous inspection, is now equally as good as that in other subjects.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

'We learn to love and to be loved' was the way that one pupil summed up pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils care deeply for each other. Many pupils join the school with behavioral problems, including some permanently excluded from other schools. Not only do they learn to control their emotions, but go one step further by mentoring younger ones who may be going through the same difficulties that they have experienced. Pupils are kind and polite. They behave well and have positive attitudes towards learning. Attendance, although slightly below average, is much improved since the previous inspection. Pupils' good progress in basic skills ensures they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils have a good grasp of the importance of healthy eating and engage diligently in games and sport activities. They are aware of the risks associated with alcohol and smoking. Pupils behave safely in and around the school and have great confidence in approaching members of staff for help and support when needed. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community, although their awareness of the cultural diversity of modern Britain is relatively weak. They voice their opinions confidently and participate enthusiastically in the school council. They are proud of their influence in improving the school's environment, such as the provision of bike racks, litter picks and recycling. In the community, pupils participate in a wide range of activities and raise funds to support those less fortunate than themselves.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers make learning fun for pupils by choosing topics that they find stimulating. Year 6 pupils were introduced to algebra by travelling to a different planet on a shopping trip for example, while Year 2 pupils learnt to use adjectives to describe their own mystery animal after a visit to the zoo. Pupils also enjoy lessons where they solve problems and are active. Sometimes though, teachers take too long on the introduction, which slows the pace of lessons, when pupils know what they have to do and are keen to get started. Pupils are usually given tasks that they find challenging, but achievable at their own level. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils with learning difficulties. They are skilled at making pupils think for themselves in order to achieve success, so the progress made by these is equal to that of the others.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

Pupils' good progress in numeracy and literacy is helped by the many opportunities that they have to practise their basic skills in other subjects. For instance, learning French broadens pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultures in other countries. However, there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to learn about people of different backgrounds and cultures living in Britain. Great care goes into planning of personal, social and health education. The range of topics covered is extensive, and very well tailored to the pupils' circumstances. Assemblies provide an outstanding vehicle for joyous celebration and spiritual development. They are typified by great enjoyment and enthusiastic acts of worship. Physical education is significantly enhanced by good opportunities outside the school day. Good use is made of visitors, excursions, residential trips and extra-curricular activities, including sports. The school's extended provision beyond the school day, such as the free offer of breakfast and games in the morning, is much appreciated by parents and has played a significant part in improving health, attitudes and attendance.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Staff and pupils value and respect each other. Pupils express great confidence in their teachers and support staff, knowing that any problems they face will be dealt with successfully. Arrangements for health and safety and for safeguarding pupils are robust. Every one of the small army of volunteers has been thoroughly checked before being allowed to work with children. Staff have an exceptional knowledge of individual pupils, their circumstances and backgrounds, which ensures that their welfare needs are fully met. When required, the school makes use of its excellent links with external agencies to provide support for pupils that is tailored to their individual needs. Support starts even before children join the school. The 'Inspire Workshop', for example, provides assistance for parents and their children before they start Nursery. Pupils' progress is tracked well. Pupils are aware of their targets, but while some marking makes clear exactly what they need to do to improve, other marking relies simply on smiley faces and ticks. This is creating variability in overall progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school's leaders, including governors, make good use of data to provide them with an accurate picture of the school's performance. Priorities for improvement are always the ones that will have the biggest impact on raising standards, either academic or in terms of personal development. Actions are well thought out and supported by excellent systems for staff training. The success of such actions is observed in the significant improvements made since the school was last inspected. Checks on teaching clearly identify where improvements can be made, even when the lesson is found to be outstanding. Subject leaders play a good role in monitoring provision through checks on planning and work in books, although the part they play in observing lessons is more limited. Above all else, the school's leaders, and especially the headteacher, have instilled an ethos of caring for others that pervades all that the school does.

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

21 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, B37 6LW

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. It was a great privilege to be able to join you in your worship in assembly and see just how much you really care for one another. We found talking to you very helpful, and were impressed by your good manners. You told us how much you enjoy coming to school, because you like all the trips and have lots of friends. We were also impressed by how well you behave, especially in the playgrounds where you make sure that everyone plays safely. Some of you find it difficult to settle when you start school. However, the staff are absolutely brilliant at helping you to learn how to behave with others, and many of you are now good examples to other pupils of how to be a responsible and caring member of the school community. It was good to see you choosing healthy foods from the canteen, although those of you bringing packed lunches could ask for fewer crisps and chocolate bars! More of you are coming to school as often as possible, but some of you could still do better. So make sure you come to school whenever you can.

Overall, we found that you are getting a good education. You do well in your English, maths, science and information and communication technology (ICT), so you are well prepared for moving to secondary school. You learn lots of different things, but not enough about how other people live in Britain, so we have asked your teachers to tell you more about this. Your teachers make lessons fun, so you enjoy them. Sometimes you want to get started on your work sooner than your teacher allows, so we have asked your teachers to make the starts of lessons go a bit more quickly. In some years you make very quick progress, because the teachers' comments written in your books explain exactly what you need to do to improve your work. In other years your progress is slower, because the comments are not as helpful. So we have asked the grown ups who run the school to make sure that you all know exactly what to do to improve. Your school is getting better and better all the time, because the people who run it concentrate hard on sorting out anything that is not quite right. All of them want the very best for you.

With all best wishes for your futures

Yours sincerely

David Driscoll Lead inspector



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Lead inspector