

St Anne's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109217
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	309931
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Daniel Towl HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Annabell Plaister
Headteacher	Angela Bolitho
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002
School address	Hewish Weston-super-Mare BS24 6RT
Telephone number	01934 832159
Fax number	01934 835568

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Anne's Church of England Primary School is a voluntary controlled mixed school just outside Weston-super-Mare that draws its pupils from a wide area including rural and urban districts. The school is smaller than average and nearly all pupils are from White British families. There are a few Traveller children. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion eligible for free school meals. The most recent information shows that the percentage of pupils who enter the school after the start of the academic year is greater than usual.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is now a satisfactory school following a period of declining standards and unsettled management. The new headteacher has shown good leadership and quickly identified what needed to be done to improve the school's performance. Good use has been made of external support and advice to develop expertise in evaluating lessons, especially for the leadership team.

The headteacher has successfully refocused the school on raising standards and improving pupils' achievements. New processes for checking the quality of lessons and pupils' progress are robust and rigorous. Standards overall were below average in the 2007 tests, though pupils' targets in Key Stage 1 were exceeded. Despite satisfactory achievements in reading at Key Stage 2, there was underachievement in writing and mathematics. Pupils in the present Year 6, however, have made satisfactory progress so far and are on track to meet the more challenging targets that have been set. Writing and mental arithmetic are now rightly identified as areas for whole-school improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

New procedures for analysing and monitoring pupils' year on year performance are helping teachers gain a more detailed knowledge of what pupils should be achieving, although this gain is not yet evident in all lessons. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but more effective in Key Stage 2 where lessons have sharper learning objectives and engage pupils better in their learning. There are some unsatisfactory lessons in both Key Stages 1 and 2. These lessons do not have a clear enough focus and purpose to ensure that pupils learn effectively. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, most of whom enjoy their lessons. Pupils welcome the good guidance they receive from teachers' marking and are increasingly aware of their targets. Older pupils know the levels they need to attain. The school has successfully introduced a new curriculum organisation with better links between subjects that enable greater coherence in pupils' learning.

Behaviour is good and pupils really like coming to school. They are happy that they are in a safe environment and are not concerned about bullying, knowing that any incidents are quickly dealt with. They are well aware of their own safety and recently they have been involved in a campaign to improve road safety outside the school. Pupils understand the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise. They participate well in the very active playtimes where they get on well together, using a wide range of small equipment to make play and games more interesting. They enjoy a good range of clubs. Older pupils are proud of their additional responsibilities at break times and on the school council, and make a good contribution to the school community.

The new leadership team has received appropriate training and support to improve management skills, with all staff increasingly aware of their individual responsibilities in raising standards. The clear vision and energy of the headteacher in implementing changes, including the setting of more challenging targets for pupils, have contributed to the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children are enabled to start school with confidence. Teaching is sensitive to their needs. Some independent activities are not organised adequately to provide effective learning opportunities.

Children enter school with average abilities. They make satisfactory progress overall but good progress in their personal and social skills. For instance, pupils new to the school, after just a few weeks, get on well together, many talking confidently in small groups and plenary sessions. The most recent group of children assessed achieved best in creative, physical and mathematical development, the last being a focus for improvement across the whole school. The curriculum complies with statutory requirements. Parents have good involvement in the induction of their children. Following in-service training for teachers, assessment has improved. Children's achievements are carefully recorded and placed in learning profiles. The records are used effectively to plan the next steps in learning. Other areas identified for improvement have a strong focus on raising achievement. This is in line with the improved monitoring and evaluation now undertaken across the whole school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' achievements in mathematics, especially in mental mathematics.
- Raise pupils' achievements in writing.
- Eliminate any unsatisfactory teaching by ensuring that all lessons have a clear focus and purpose and meet the needs of pupils.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In recent years, there has been inconsistency in standards and pupils' achievements. In the 2006 tests, most pupils had made satisfactory progress and standards were above average. However, the school's analysis of the latest tests in 2007 shows below average performance in Key Stages 1 and 2. Targets were met in Key Stage 1 but not in Key Stage 2. Achievement in reading and science was satisfactory in Key Stage 2 but inadequate in writing and mathematics, especially in mental mathematics. There were increases in the number of boys who reached the higher Level 5 in mathematics, which had been a focus for improvement. Writing and mental arithmetic are now school priorities for improvement and are beginning to show through in the satisfactory progress of the pupils in the current Year 6, who are on course to meet their targets. These targets are more challenging than in previous years, especially as this group had lower than average attainment at Key Stage 1. Progress is good in reading, especially for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, whose overall progress is good. Higher attaining boys and girls are reaching their predicted levels. The school's improved system to check pupils' progress has meant that teachers now have higher expectations of what should be achieved, though these are not reflected in all lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good personal development and well-being are demonstrated in the friendly, confident manner in which pupils talk to each other and to adults. Pupils use the good range of playground equipment safely and in cooperation with each other. Pupils of all ages are generous in valuing each other's achievements. They much enjoy school, especially when they are given opportunities to work in groups. On the whole, they behave well, although a few slow the pace of their learning because they do not listen well to instructions. Pupils' attendance is average. Pupils

have good knowledge about healthy eating and safety procedures and take good care of themselves. Although some pupils report minor incidents of bullying, they are confident that adults deal with them. No racist incidents have been reported. The school council is proud of the part it has played in designing playground equipment. Younger pupils enjoy celebration of their achievement through the 'golden book'. Older pupils are proud of their roles as yellow-hat playground mediators and green-hat environmental monitors. Both groups willingly take on these extra responsibilities. Pupils are confident and, overall, have adequate skills to take them to their next steps in learning, both in school and in the wider world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although teaching and learning are satisfactory, there is variability in the quality of lessons across the school, with some that are unsatisfactory. The best lessons are in Key Stage 2 where teaching has a sharper focus and pupils achieve relatively better because learning is more interesting and engaging. There are some lessons where pupils' achievements are inadequate and expectations are low. Learning is sometimes hindered because activities and tasks lack clarity and purpose. Teachers work closely with their assistants who make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially where pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils mostly make good progress. All teachers are developing their use of interactive whiteboards to make their teaching more visually stimulating. A very small number of parents feel that lessons do not meet the needs of their children in Key Stage 1.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. School staff are working hard to improve and reorganise the curriculum, which is satisfactory. The new curriculum has yet to be fully implemented and evaluated. Having abandoned setting arrangements for different subjects in favour of mixed-age and mixed-ability classes, staff are now beginning to add variety to lessons by linking topics. There are more opportunities now to use English and mathematics in a wider range of contexts, for example, when writing historical stories. Pupils state that lessons are now more interesting. They have more opportunities to think for themselves. Extra-curricular provision is good with activities in sport, the arts and gardening. Pupils enjoy visits across all areas of the curriculum. They make good use of the local area, especially the church. Pupils' experiences are enhanced by visits, for example, to Bristol's zoo and art gallery.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for in a friendly and secure environment. The school meets health and safety requirements in full and there is an ongoing review of risk assessments. Specialists from outside agencies work regularly to help pupils with specific difficulties. Teachers monitor pupils' well-being carefully to identify problems early and deal with them sensitively. They now monitor academic progress well so that they know who needs further challenge or support but this is not happening consistently in all lessons. Pupils' work is regularly marked. Pupils are given praise with clear points for improvement to help them meet their targets. They are confident that they know how well they are doing and how they can improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, in post for just over one year, is leading the school very effectively, establishing a common purpose. She quickly and accurately analysed that the school needed to make significant improvements, especially in the way it checked pupils' progress in order to set challenging targets. The new leadership team has a very clear role and all teachers are more aware of their responsibilities in raising standards. Subject leaders are developing their skills in monitoring subject standards, pupils' achievements and the quality of lessons. The school now has a good understanding of its strengths and the areas that need attention and this has led to steady improvements. External advice, support and staff development have all contributed to improving the management of the school and created a stronger focus on pupils' performance. Parents are supportive of the school and the school works well with outside agencies, especially in supporting those pupils who need additional help. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are well established.

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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
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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	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	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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

4 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anne's Church Of England Primary School, Hewish

Thank you very much for making us feel welcome when we came to your school. We found the school was satisfactory and had some good points as well. The school cares for you well and your personal development is good.

We enjoyed meeting you all. You told us that you enjoy school and that most lessons are interesting. Your behaviour is good and you get on well with each other. We saw this in lessons and particularly in the playground. You seem to enjoy using all the small apparatus at break times. We liked the way the yellow-hats and green-hats help at break times and help you care for your environment. We are pleased with how much you are trying to eat healthily and take exercise.

The new headteacher has made some important changes to improve the school, especially in the way that she and the teachers now check how well you are doing. This helps the teachers know exactly what to teach so that you make good progress during lessons. At present, not all of you are making enough progress in writing and mathematics so we want the teachers to help you even more so that you do better. Those of you who have extra help because you find things more difficult at times are doing very well, especially in reading. Keep it up!

Not all of your lessons are helping you to learn as much as they should. We have asked the headteacher and staff to improve this so that you make good progress all the time. You can help by listening carefully to your teachers so that you know exactly what to do to succeed.

Good luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Towl HMI

Annex B

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Daniel Towl
HMI