

Annecy Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114571
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	311650
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Barbara Crane

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	J McCapra
Headteacher	Fiona McGonigle
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 0001
School address	Sutton Avenue Seaford BN25 4LF
Telephone number	01323 894892
Fax number	01323 894171

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average Catholic primary school. It has an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost a tenth of the pupils have English as an additional language but very few of these pupils are at an early stage of acquiring English. The headteacher has been in post for about five terms, following a lengthy period when the school was without permanent leadership. Children's attainment when they start in the Reception class varies widely from one year to the next, but is generally average.

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 a satisfactory school which is improving. The headteacher has worked tirelessly to bring about change for the better after a time of instability in leadership in recent years. The school's strong Catholic ethos is reflected in pupils' warm relationships with each other and the staff. Pupils are well prepared for the future socially but not so well in their work.

Satisfactory teaching leads to pupils' reasonable progress and satisfactory achievement. It is no better than this because pupils' progress varies across different ages, abilities and subjects. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. Through Years 1 to 6, they make satisfactory progress and standards are average by Year 2 and Year 6. Their progress is now speeding up due to successful initiatives to improve teaching and learning, for example in mathematics where work is well matched to the pupils' range of ability. More able pupils are not always given hard enough work in writing and science and this restricts their achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress when they work with teaching assistants in withdrawal groups but this is slower when they are taught in class. This is because teachers do not always adapt the work sufficiently to take account of pupils' individual needs.

The satisfactory curriculum is enriched by many popular clubs. Good pastoral care and personal development is evident. Pupils show care and consideration for each other. They enjoy school, behave well and know how to stay safe. Pupils' excellent understanding of how to ensure a healthy future is reflected in their choices of healthy food and active lifestyles. They make a good contribution to the community by making decisions about how things can improve. The new tracking system is enabling teachers to check pupils' progress in their work, pinpoint areas of weakness and set challenging but realistic targets. These are not yet shared with pupils so their academic guidance and support is satisfactory rather than good.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has injected new vigour and a clear sense of direction for the school. The staff team are united in their commitment to further improve, and sound self-evaluation means that the school has the right priorities. This, coupled to its successes, indicates the school's satisfactory capacity to improve. As yet, the skills and actions of middle managers in analysing data to check pupils' progress are not sufficiently widespread to support fully the school's drive to raise standards and pupils' achievement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with attainment that is close to that that expected for their age. They make good progress and many reach beyond the expected level in all areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. Teaching ensures that children are happy, curious and want to learn. Consequently, children enjoy their first experiences of school. The good curriculum ensures that children become independent and confident. Good leadership and management have ensured that provision for children has improved. The right areas for improvement are identified and being worked on, for example, better stimuli for children's learning outdoors.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve more able pupils' progress in writing and science

- improve progress for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- ensure that pupils know their targets and that managers check pupils' progress towards these more closely.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make good progress in the Reception class and most reach beyond the expectations for their age by the start of Year 1. This gives children a firm platform for the future. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been broadly average in recent years. The results for Year 6 pupils in 2007 showed that the school met its targets for the proportion of pupils gaining the level expected for their age but fell short of the target for those exceeding this in English and science. Whilst pupils' achievement is satisfactory from Years 1 to 6, the lack of challenge for more able pupils in writing and science restricts their progress. Pupils' progress in mathematics is more rapid because the work is well adapted to suit pupils' different abilities, with a particularly good level of challenge in problem-solving activities. Pupils who are at an early stage of acquiring English make similar progress to their peers. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. It is prevented from being at a better level because teachers do not always take account of pupils' needs in class. Consequently, these pupils do not maintain the good rate of progress they make when they are supported by teaching assistants outside class lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are friendly, polite and well behaved. Good relationships are seen everywhere and contribute to the school's happy atmosphere. Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe and understand how their actions have consequences for themselves and others. Year 6 pupils say that the best lesson they have learned about growing up is to 'make decisions for yourself and not be influenced by people who want you to do the wrong thing.' Reception children quickly learn the benefits of working together and sharing resources because of good guidance from staff. Pupils put into practice what they have learned about healthy eating. They make the right choices about what they eat, for example fruit and vegetables as snacks, and they drink plenty of water and milk. They lead active lifestyles and keep fit through sport. The school has worked very effectively with parents and health services to achieve pupils' excellent understanding of how to keep healthy. Pupils are keen to help their community improve and do so effectively through the school council and taking on a wide range of responsibilities in school. Those who are feeling uncertain on the playground appreciate the work of pupils acting as 'Friendship Finders'. Pupils' attendance has improved to an average level, due to the schools successful initiatives. Pupils are well prepared for the future in terms of their positive attitudes to learning and confidence socially but are less well prepared in terms of their progress in their work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching for Reception children takes good account of how young children learn and ensures their good progress. Throughout the school, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and build trusting relationships that support the calm atmosphere in classrooms. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to engage pupils' interest in learning. Teachers are good at adapting their questioning to probe the understanding of most pupils. The work set for the more able pupils in writing and science, is not always adjusted to meet their needs. Teachers' expectations of what these pupils can achieve are too low. Teachers pitch work much more successfully in mathematics and so more able pupils learn at a faster rate. Support from teaching assistants for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good in sessions when pupils are withdrawn from classrooms. Pupils make good progress because the support focuses closely on the small steps necessary for pupils to reach their targets. When these pupils are taught with their class group, the work is sometimes not pitched at just the right level for them and so their progress is limited.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Planning for Reception children effectively develops their skills in literacy, numeracy and personal, social and emotional development. Over half of the pupils take part in at least one extra-curricular activity from the good range offered. Good planning for education in personal relationships and health education supports pupils' awareness of how to cope with the pressures of growing up and making the right choices. Planning for literacy and numeracy has been strengthened recently. Planning for writing across the curriculum, and to improve pupils' problem solving in mathematics in particular, is helping to improve pupils' skills. The curriculum is not adapted as well as it should be to challenge more able pupils and to consistently support those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils use ICT confidently because of good opportunities to explore its possibilities in presenting their ideas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The daily care for pupils is given high priority. Procedures for protecting and safeguarding pupils are secure. Pastoral guidance is strong and effective. Pupils say that there is someone on hand to talk to if they have problems. Academic guidance to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress in their work is less effective. A good tracking system has been recently introduced and learners' progress is adequately monitored. This has put the school in a better position to set realistic and challenging targets, but pupils are uncertain of what these are. The school has worked well in partnership with the local authority to evaluate its provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This has revealed the need to ensure that pupils' needs are more consistently supported in class. Whilst plans are in hand to address this, it is too early to see the impact of these on pupils' rates of progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The view of the overwhelming majority of parents is that the school is improving under the headteacher's good leadership. The pace of change to boost the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and attendance has quickened since her appointment and is starting to show results. She has worked relentlessly with the staff to put in place a broad range of basic structures to ensure that the school is in a sound position to eradicate weaknesses and build on its strengths. The success of this work is evident in the improved provision for Reception children and the pupils' better progress, throughout the school, in mathematics. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and leads to carefully planned actions that reflect the right priorities. The staff benefit from good feedback about how they can improve their teaching. Teachers who are new to the profession are well supported. Whilst middle managers are aware of their new roles and responsibilities, they have yet to be consistently effective in monitoring and analysing data on pupils' performance so that they can gain an overview of how well initiatives are working. Governors provide satisfactory support and fulfil all of their statutory duties. Through self-reflection on their effectiveness, they have rightly identified the need to boost their ability to ask pertinent questions of the school.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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?	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.

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	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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Annecy Catholic Primary School, Seaford, BN25 4LF

Thank you all for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our time with you. We are writing to tell you what we found out. You go to a satisfactory school and it is improving. Reception children get a good start. Those of you in Years 1 to 6 do reasonably well in your work because of sound teaching and you reach average standards in your work.

You play a big part in making your school a happy place. This is because you are growing up as sensible young people, who care for each other and get on well together. Your behaviour is good. Keep it up! We were pleased to see that you help each other. The school council is helping the school to improve and the 'Friendship Finders' do a grand job on the playground. We could see that you have a brilliant understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. Well done for bringing fruit and vegetables to eat at playtimes and healthy packed lunches.

We are glad that you enjoy school and that the staff look after you well. You have a satisfactory curriculum and it is good that so many of you take part in the extra activities.

The staff want the best for you. Everyone is working hard to make your school improve. We have asked the people in charge and your teachers to do these things:

- make sure that the work is a bit harder in writing and science for those of you who can do more
- make sure that work is at the right level for those of you who need extra help
- make sure that you know what your targets are and check that you are reaching them.

You can help by always trying your hardest. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Barbara Crane Lead Inspector