

St Anne Line Catholic Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115160
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311859
Inspection dates	2–3 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Sheelagh Barnes

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Hill
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Russell
Date of previous school inspection	2 February 2004
School address	Wickhay Basildon Essex SS15 5AF
Telephone number	01268 524263
Fax number	01268 242512

Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Anne Line is a smaller school than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average, as is the proportion of pupils who need extra support with their learning, although these numbers vary greatly from year group to year group. Over a third of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and around a third have English as an additional language. There are proportionally more pupils than nationally with a statement of educational need. Attainment on entry is below the level expected for children's ages. The school has attained Activemark and the Healthy Schools accreditation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The well-informed and determined leadership of the headteacher has been a prime force in the good improvement the school has made since the previous inspection. The effectiveness of the school is now good. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness matches the findings of the inspection in nearly all aspects, except that the headteacher was too modest in her judgement of personal development. Leadership and management are good overall and there have been significant improvements in provision and standards in the Foundation Stage and for literacy and numeracy. As a result, pupils throughout the school make good progress and standards are overall in line with those expected by the end of Year 2.

The care, guidance and support the school provides are excellent overall. The support for pupils with English as an additional language and for those who need extra help with their learning is excellent. These pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and abilities as a result. Parents are pleased with the school and say 'My mind is at rest when my child is at school as I know she is being well looked after' and 'As parents we are extremely happy with the way the school is run and organised.'

Pupils' personal, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils behave outstandingly well. They enjoy school and the activities provided for them. They take part happily and wholeheartedly and are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Their extremely good behaviour and concentration are a significant factor in the good progress they make in lessons.

The quality of teaching is good and leads to good learning. Teachers plan together to ensure equality of opportunity for pupils. They mark work with positive comments about what has been successful and feed back to pupils effectively about what they have done well. There is less consistency in the way that teachers tell pupils what they are going to learn about or how they need to improve. This issue has already been identified by in-school monitoring. The curriculum is good. It is based on a good amount of practical and exciting activities, such as hatching chicks and visits to the seaside. School self-evaluation has highlighted the need to further review the curriculum to strengthen the links between subjects and increase learning opportunities further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage have resulted in significant improvement since the previous inspection. The progress that pupils make in all six areas of learning for their age is good, due to the good quality of the teaching. Children settle happily into the Reception classes because of good induction procedures and the strong links with the local nursery school. Teachers and support staff establish good relationships with the children and their families. Parents are confident that their children are looked after well and are effectively involved in their children's education. Routines and expectations of behaviour are quickly established. The curriculum is good and is based on a variety of exciting and interesting practical activities. As a result, children achieve well, are happy and confident and their personal development is good. The school has identified the need to develop the outdoor and creative curriculum further. It is in the process of improving the outdoor area as part of the refurbishment of the accommodation generally.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure greater consistency in the ways teachers involve pupils in understanding what they need to do next to improve their work.
- Maximise the opportunities to make links between subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils settle well into the Reception classes and make good overall gains in their learning, due to the good quality of the provision. This good progress continues through Year 1 and Year 2. Pupils who need extra help with their learning and those with English as an additional language are supported effectively so that they achieve well in relation to their abilities. Standards have improved in recent years because of a number of initiatives throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, standards in mathematics, science and reading are average. Standards in writing are above average. Pupils attain the challenging targets the school sets for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' behaviour was exemplary during this inspection. This reflects their outstanding overall personal development. Children play happily in the Foundation Stage indoor and outdoor areas, whether or not adults are supporting them, and pupils relate together very well throughout the school. Lunch and play are times of sociable and civilised interaction and movement of pupils around the school is calm and orderly. The children appreciate the very strong sense of community in the school and feel secure and cherished. This is particularly evident in assemblies, which are times of celebration of the diversity and cohesion of this school community. Pupils know how best to keep fit and healthy, enjoy all the activities on offer and are keen to learn. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Planning for lessons is good. Teachers in parallel classes frequently plan together to ensure that pupils have the same good opportunities. Teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to lessons. Teaching is well-matched to the needs of pupils from all groups, including those who have English as an additional language or those who need support with their learning. Teachers often use practical experiences to make learning interesting and exciting; for example, giving pupils opportunities to experiment with different ways to make toys move. As a result, pupils find lessons enjoyable and concentrate well. Teachers explain how pupils and staff are going to know if the learning is successful. This is generally effective, but on occasion these explanations use terms that are difficult for pupils to understand. Marking is regular and encouraging. There are many ways that teachers let pupils know that they have done well, including stars, stickers and stamps. However, information of how to make their work even better is not consistent and the systems used by teachers vary between classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that engages the pupils' interest and provides them with the skills they need. A good programme for personal, social and health education ensures that each child has the opportunity to explore emotional and social issues. Good planning ensures that basic skills in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) are taught effectively. Teachers go to great lengths to make the lesson fun for the children: for example by bringing in artefacts, including action games. The curriculum is enriched effectively. Recently hatched chicks were a centre of interest during the inspection, giving rise to some good quality work in Year 2, including clay models and computer-generated drawings. Drawing subjects together in this way more regularly as a focus for learning is an area for development recognised in the school improvement plan.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The inspection confirms the school's judgement that this is an outstanding aspect of provision. Each child's individual needs are ascertained and catered for very thoroughly. A significant and increasing number of pupils for whom English is not their first language receive excellent support from trained staff within and beyond lessons to learn English as rapidly as possible and to integrate with their friends. Pupils who have specific needs in their learning also receive outstanding support. Parents are involved in the drawing up of comprehensive programmes for their children that help them to develop and learn. Their progress is regularly reviewed and programmes adjusted so that all these children make optimum progress. All pupils have targets in literacy and numeracy, and are supported in various ways within each class to achieve them. The school meets all statutory requirements with regard to the vetting of staff and ensuring that the children are safe.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good quality of leadership and management has resulted in a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. Leadership of numeracy, literacy and the Foundation Stage has been particularly effective in raising standards recently. The headteacher has a good knowledge of standards throughout the school. She has high expectations of where she wants the school to be and a clear and measurable plan of how to achieve this. Governors are supportive, take their responsibilities seriously and have undertaken training to develop their understanding further. They are motivated and well-informed and are effectively developing their role as a critical friend of the school, although they still rely largely on the headteacher to provide them with information. Coordinators, some of whom are new to their post, are effectively developing their roles in monitoring and development planning for their subjects.

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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?	2
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 ¹ 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	1

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?	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

4 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Anne Line Catholic Infant School, Basildon, Essex, SS15 5AF

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited the other day. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you in lessons, assembly and playtimes.

We want to tell you the really good things about your school.

- You behave excellently and do a lot to help others.
- Teaching is good and so you enjoy lessons.
- You make good progress in your learning.
- Your parents are pleased with how well you are doing.
- All staff look after you extremely well and you have a friendly school.
- Your teachers help all of you to do your best, including those of you who find some work hard.
- Your headteacher knows you and the school very well and she knows what to do to make the school even better.

The things we have asked your teachers to do next are;

- to look at the links between different subjects so that you can be learning about different things at the same time
- to help you to know even more about what to do to make your work even better.

You can help to make your school even better by always trying your hardest, just as you do now. We hope you have a lovely summer holiday.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Barnes Lead inspector