

St Anselm's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118765
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313080
Inspection dates	11–12 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Richard Blackmore

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Santer
Headteacher	Catherine Ward
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Littlebrook Manor Way Temple Hill Dartford DA1 5EA
Telephone number	01322 225173
Fax number	01322 224937

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a little larger than most other primary schools nationally. The majority of pupils are of White British background. Children enter the Foundation Stage with the skills and knowledge broadly expected for four-year-olds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average and the number of pupils with a statement of educational need is below the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average, and that of pupils for whom English is an additional language is below the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. The majority of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire are fully supportive of the school. A parent commented, 'My daughter loves school and I feel she is getting a very good education.' Pupils enjoy school very much and take advantage of the wide-ranging curriculum. The school is a harmonious community where pupils flourish. The headteacher has instilled a common purpose and an effective team approach to the school's development. Staff, in particular senior staff, are committed and involved in highly accurate self-evaluation, which robustly secures improvement. The inspection confirmed the school's view of how effective it is and there is a strong capacity for further improvement.

Pupils start school with knowledge and skills that are broadly expected for their age and they do well in Reception, where provision is good. By the time they leave in Year 6, standards are above average. This represents good progress and is supported by effective teaching and an enriched curriculum. Progress is good because of a strong emphasis on basic skills, including writing and calculating.

Good teaching, which is sometimes outstanding, and a good curriculum ensure that pupils achieve well and attain standards that are above average. Lessons are interesting and teaching styles capture the interest of pupils while maintaining a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils are encouraged to work with their teachers to evaluate and comment on their own learning. However, feedback to the pupils on how to improve their work is not always thorough enough to ensure continuous improvement. Lessons have good pace and provide plenty of time for pupils to work on activities that help them to consolidate newly learnt skills. Occasionally, pupils are not given tasks that match their ability. A rich range of experiences is provided through visitors, such as the police and music specialists. The strings orchestra was particularly impressive. Pupils gain very good first-hand experiences through frequent trips to places of interest.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective in helping pupils to acquire a very clear understanding of different faiths, cultures and lifestyles and an awareness of the world around them. Assemblies and positive links with the church and local organisations contribute significantly to pupils' knowledge and understanding. The pupils show very good attitudes to learning because they are involved in their education. As one pupil said, 'In most subjects we are allowed to lead our own learning.' Behaviour is good but during playtimes some pupils get bored and have too few resources to make the outside areas interesting. Pupils have very good relationships with teachers. Pupils are very polite and courteous towards each other. Pupils are thoroughly involved in the life of the community. For example, school council members ordered new cutlery, tablecloths and furniture to improve the eating environment. Good progress in acquiring key skills ensures they are well prepared for the future.

Leadership and management are good. This is a school that knows itself well and the strong commitment of staff and the leadership and management team shows that the school has good capacity for further improvement. The headteacher successfully focuses the school's work on its priorities.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

In this calm and supportive environment, children grow in confidence and make good progress, with the majority exceeding the early learning goals. Progress in personal and social development is very good. Children respond positively to the established routines and become confident learners. The curriculum is good and provides an effective balance of adult-led activities and those that children choose. This encourages independent learning. The use of the outdoor environment is planned carefully to provide additional experiences to support the children's learning. Teaching, which includes the skilful contribution of teaching assistants, is good, particularly in developing reading and writing skills. This area was identified as an area of weakness when pupils started school. Staff undertake daily observations of children's progress to ensure that activities are constructed and delivered to build on their previous learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work is consistently and precisely matched to the needs of all learners.
- Provide practical equipment to promote and reinforce positive experiences when using the outside spaces.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Pupils continue to achieve well as they move through the school, building on good progress in the Foundation Stage. Pupils reach standards that are above average by the time they leave the school. Pupils' current work and school assessment information show that pupils are doing particularly well in mathematics. Inspection evidence at the end of Year 2 shows pupils are above the national average and progress is good. By Year 6, reading is a strong subject for most pupils, whilst writing is relatively weaker. The school has good assessment systems to track pupils and identify where and when pupils underperform. In science, for example, the school correctly identifies underperformance in the study of materials. As a result, careful planning and good support for individuals in these areas mean that pupils' progress is specifically targeted. Actions such as these help to ensure that pupils perform as well in science and English as they do in mathematics. The school has set itself challenging yet realistic targets for this academic year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive well-planned support from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school's aim to nurture the uniqueness of each young person is very much in keeping with its Christian ethos. Pupils are confident and respond particularly well to the atmosphere of trust, based on respect and the recognition of individual needs. This develops excellent relationships. From Reception to Year 6, the school places great priority on playing and working together. This has resulted in great success in pupils learning how to take turns, share and cooperate with others and pupils developing into responsible and responsive citizens. Pupils' responsibility towards the wider world is developed through global links, for example, with a village in Peru. Attendance is above average and is a further indication that pupils enjoy school. Teachers value pupils highly and this contributes strongly to developing pupils' self-esteem. 'We are a family and we care for each other,' said one pupil. The well-trained 'peer mediators'

and 'playground buddies' do much to quickly settle arguments and disputes in a friendly manner. This means pupils take partial responsibility for the smooth running of playtimes. Pupils have a very clear understanding of how to keep safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and correctly identify the need to have more equipment available during break times. The school has recently appointed a teacher to specifically promote and encourage healthy lifestyles. The after-school sports clubs are very popular and ensure that pupils are introduced to a very wide range of sporting activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers creatively use interactive whiteboards and pictures to make lessons interesting and to promote pupils' interest and deeper involvement in what they are learning. Teachers make appropriate adjustments to their plans in the light of questions and answers to extend or support pupils' understanding. The improvement of pupils' writing skills and calculating in mathematics is a school-wide target for improvement. Teachers assess pupils' work well and use this information to guide their planning of future activities. However, occasionally teachers do not match tasks to individual pupils' needs. Consequently, there are times when learning is less rapid because some tasks are not correctly pitched to fully extend thinking.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Most pupils enjoy the curriculum provided. As one parent said, 'My children enjoy school and this is reflected in the way the children run in when it's time to go in.' The curriculum is enriched by 'impact days', such as the recent World War II day and the conversion of the Year 6 classroom into an Anderson shelter. Provision of extra-curricular activities has been extended and includes opportunities to learn and perform musical instruments. However, several pupils commented on the lack of provision of play activities at playtimes. The inspectors agree with this. The skills-based curriculum is now established and impacts positively on teaching and learning. The curriculum meets pupils' needs well and contributes to good achievement and pupils' outstanding personal development. However, the curriculum is not enriched consistently through all aspects of the school's work to the high level seen, for example, in history. Relatively recent changes in planning have strengthened cross-curricular links between subjects and have made learning more relevant, purposeful and enjoyable.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Teachers and other adults know individual pupils very well. There are effective procedures for tracking pupils' progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This allows the school to effectively intervene or boost progress if it slows. Outstanding pastoral care helps pupils to develop in all year groups. Pupils are increasingly aware of and involved in checking how well they are doing. They are set challenging targets for English and mathematics, which helps them to make good progress. However, there were times when a small number of pupils were unclear about specific targets used in class. Good systems are in place to ensure pupils are safeguarded and this contributes to pupils saying they feel safe at school. Child protection and staff vetting procedures fully comply with regulations. The support for pupils

with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and they are included in all the school has to offer. There is effective use of external specialists and other organisations such as secondary schools to promote learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Under the determined and driven leadership of the headteacher, the school has moved forward since the last inspection and is in a strong position to move forward even further. She has established a strong leadership team that is committed to providing high quality experiences in all aspects of school life. Self-evaluation is outstanding and enables senior staff to share expertise, work together when planning new developments and deploy staff appropriately. Subject leaders have monitored their areas but need to improve teaching through a thorough analysis of lessons and embed subject knowledge more widely. The governing body knows and understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school and undertakes training to build its understanding further.

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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 ¹ reached by learners	2
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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

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	1
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

13 February 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Anselm's Catholic Primary School, Temple Hill, Dartford DA1 5EA

Thank you very much for your help when I came to inspect your school. You were all very helpful and courteous and it was good to meet you all. I learned much about your school from our conversation with you at lunchtime and during the school day.

I am pleased to tell you that yours is a good school. Some of the things that we liked best are the ways your teachers make your lessons interesting and help you to enjoy your learning through impact days. This helps you make good progress in your work. We thought your knowledge of how to keep yourselves healthy and your spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding are outstanding. You are set challenging targets because the teachers know what you need to learn next. Your school is well led and managed by your headteacher and deputy headteacher, who work well as a team. They know your school well and what to improve next. I have pointed out to your teachers how they can improve your school even further. I have asked them to make sure that you always have activities that are at just the right level so you always learn quickly. I have also asked that you are provided with more equipment for you to use at playtimes. We enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you once again. Best wishes for the future, Richard Blackmore Lead inspector

13 February 2008

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Best wishes for the future,

Richard Blackmore
Lead inspector