

St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Fulwood, Preston

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119698
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313397
Inspection date	27 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Shirley Herring

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	292
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Tom Butler
Headteacher	Mrs Barbara Gardner
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2003
School address	St Anthony's Drive Fulwood Preston Lancashire PR2 3SQ
Telephone number	01772 726621
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: The achievement of higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 and all pupils in mathematics, and whether the stated shortcomings in accommodation affect provision in the Foundation Stage. Evidence was gathered by analysing assessment data, looking at samples of pupils' work, observing lessons and talking with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St. Anthony's is a larger than average primary school serving several parishes over a wide area. The vast majority of pupils are from a White British background with around 10% of pupils from different minority ethnic groups. Fewer pupils than average receive free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. There are a small number of pupils from Eastern Europe who are at an early stage of speaking English. There are links with a local cluster of schools and with colleges. The headteacher has been in post for less than a month.

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. Pupils enjoy the good range of activities on offer and say that the best things about their school are the friendships they make, the teachers and the provision for sport, at which they do well. The strong senior management team, and a supportive governing body, have ensured continuity in the school's work and the maintenance of good standards during recent difficulties caused by staff absence.

Children make good progress during their time in school. They enter school with skills which are broadly typical for their age and reach above average standards by the time they leave Year 6. In the 2006 national assessments in Year 6, standards were well above average in English. This was because the good analysis of previous results had been used well to introduce a range of strategies to provide additional support for individuals at an early stage. A good proportion of pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in English, but fewer achieved this in mathematics. Although mathematical skills are taught thoroughly, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills further through investigation and problem-solving. Unvalidated results show that in 2007 pupils performed at a similar level to 2006.

Standards are above that typically seen when pupils enter Year 1 and they make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Whilst standards have been above average overall at the end of Year 2, the results of the 2006 assessments were broadly average in mathematics. This was due to an over-reliance on written methods and insufficient practical work which has been addressed this term. There are now more opportunities provided for practical activities to help understanding, though it is too soon to judge the impact. The good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has resulted in a high proportion of pupils achieving the expected level in reading and writing. However, a lack of challenge for more able pupils means that fewer pupils than could be expected achieve the higher Level 3.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. They show a good attitude to learning and so they achieve well. Behaviour is good in class and in the playground. Pupils have a good understanding of living a healthy lifestyle and know how to keep safe. Guided by the school's Catholic tradition pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils' are very aware of the needs of others and make an outstanding contribution to the school and wider community. For example, pupils devote some Sunday afternoons to organising Fun Days in school to raise money for charities at home and abroad. They are well prepared for later life because of the good standards they achieve and the many opportunities they have to accept responsibilities.

Teaching is good overall. The teaching of basic skills is thorough and pupils learn well. The rate of learning accelerates in Years 5 and 6 where work is very carefully planned and the lessons move at a brisker pace. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1, though lessons do not always take account of the need to challenge higher attaining pupils who do not achieve as well as they can. Several parents reported concerns that disruptions in staffing have sometimes slowed pupils' progress in the recent past. The curriculum is good overall and it is enhanced by visits and visitors to school. The school takes good care of its pupils and all the recommended procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. The good levels of support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enable them to achieve well. The relatively few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English are supported well and are making good progress.

The school has good systems in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress through the school. These have been particularly effective in raising standards in English.

The school is well led and managed by a skilled senior staff. Governance is good. The governors' good understanding of the strengths and needs of the school enabled them to support the temporary leadership team well. Results in national tests are analysed carefully and have been used well to bring about improvements in English. Under the leadership of the new headteacher the school is now examining ways to bring about similar improvements in mathematics. There have been improvements in information communication technology (ICT) and in writing since the last inspection. The school has successfully met challenging targets in English, but has not been quite so successful in mathematics. The school's evaluation of its work is accurate in every respect and indicates a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) is good overall. Children enter the school with a range of skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in Reception because of effective teaching which is based on a secure understanding of how young children learn. Teachers make regular use of information from assessments to plan suitable work for individuals and groups so children achieve well. By the time they enter Year 1 most children have reached or exceeded the nationally recommended goals for their age. Whilst teachers provide a wide range of activities in all areas of learning, the cramped conditions in the Reception areas and the tired condition of some of the resources inhibit the variety of free flow of activities to enrich the curriculum. The school has submitted plans to extend the indoor accommodation and work is underway to provide easy access to a secure outdoor area. Several parents commented on the very good procedures for introducing the children to school in the term before they start, which help children settle quickly into Reception.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of more able pupils in reading and writing in Key Stage 1, and in mathematics across 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?	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	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?	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	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	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

28 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, Lancashire, PR2 3SQ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you and was interested to hear that you like school, especially the friendship, the teachers and the sports.

I agree with you that St Anthony's is a good school. You play an important part in this as you come to school regularly, work hard and behave well. I was particularly impressed with your work for others through raising money for charity and the way the older pupils help the younger ones at playtime. You all seemed to be enjoying the music in the playground.

All the adults in school take good care of you and you receive a lot of support in class if you need it. Teachers make sure that you reach a good standard by the time you leave school, particularly in English, and you have all the skills you need to make sure that you can become even more successful learners in the future. I do feel though that you could reach even higher standards in mathematics in all classes and some of you in Years 1 and 2 could do even better in reading and writing. Your school is going to work with you to achieve these aims.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Herring

Lead inspector