

St Anne's CofE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135036
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	319597
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Anthony O'Malley HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	318
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Tinsdale
Headteacher	Simon Tapp
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wyre Hill Bewdley DY12 2UQ
Telephone number	01299 402013
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school opened in September 2007 as part of the local reorganisation of schools that occurred in the Wyre Forest area of Worcestershire. Most of the current pupils transferred from the former first school. The school's staff were appointed at that time from a wide range of schools within and outside the Wyre Forest. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average and a small number of pupils have disabilities. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) into the Reception classes. The breakfast and after-school clubs and the nursery based on the site are managed privately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Staff and governors are accurate in their assessment that the school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has successfully overcome many of the issues that arise when new schools are created as part of a local review, and has become a valued part of the local community. One parent's comment expressed the views of many: 'We are really pleased with how our children have settled into the school. They really enjoy their days at St Anne's.' Current building work presents challenges for staff and pupils. In spite of this, the school is calm because pupils behave well and understand how to act with consideration towards others.

Children start school with skills expected for their age. They make good progress in Reception and the majority are already on their way, in a number of areas of learning, to attaining the levels expected when they enter Year 1. Throughout the rest of the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards, although improving, are in line with the national averages. For example, standards in writing are higher now, particularly in Years 1 and 2, as more motivating and purposeful writing opportunities feature regularly in literacy activities. Pupils with learning difficulties generally make the same progress as the rest. However, the small numbers of pupils with disabilities make good progress. At present, some of the assessment data the school use to track progress are not sufficiently accurate. This makes it difficult for senior leaders to set challenging but realistic targets to help raise standards further.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory but there is evidence, for example in writing books, that it is improving and having a positive impact on standards. Pupils have good attitudes to learning and respond with enthusiasm when work is challenging. However, too often lessons do not motivate the highest attainers or take full account of the needs of the less able. In these lessons where insufficient consideration has been given to earlier learning, relatively few pupils respond to whole-class questions and some less able pupils are unsure what the stated learning objectives mean. Work in pupils' books shows that the quality of marking, expectation of presentation and the use of targets are inconsistent.

Attendance is above average and pupils feel safe and secure at school. They choose healthy lunches and are keen to participate in the good range of sporting activities. The quality of relationships throughout the school and the rich programme of extra-curricular activities contribute effectively to their good personal development. However, the curriculum as a whole is no better than satisfactory because plans to improve provision for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are still at an early stage of implementation. The care, guidance and support pupils receive are good. Pastoral care is particularly strong and care for the most vulnerable pupils is very effective.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Good leadership by the headteacher and governors has successfully established a team with a common sense of purpose. Their impact is evident in rising standards and the higher proportion of good teaching. School self-evaluation is accurate and further indicates the school's good capacity for further improvement. It acknowledges that there remain significant areas for improvement. These include building the capacity of all subject leaders to enable them to drive improvements in their areas of responsibility.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the school with skills expected for their age. In the Reception classes, children are making good progress and are on course to reach above expected standards. Knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development are relatively weaker areas. Particularly impressive is the progress made by boys. Changes made to the curriculum have ensured that boys as well as girls enjoy reading and creative activities, and this has helped narrow the attainment gap between them. Excellent induction procedures, including visits to feeder settings and home visits, help children settle quickly into school life. Good teaching and interesting activities focus on building up children's self-confidence and developing skills. Careful planning ensures effective use is made of the outdoor provision to enrich learning and there is an appropriate balance between activities directed by the teacher and those chosen by the children. The school has developed effective assessment systems and these enable the early identification of children with learning difficulties. The school's strong partnerships with outside agencies add to the effectiveness of interventions to support children at risk of underachieving. There are good links with parents and they are kept well informed of their children's progress. The EYFS is led and managed well. Staff are rightly focusing on developing the outdoor classroom further to enable even more effective learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good, and caters more effectively for the wide range of pupils' needs in each class.
- Ensure assessments made of pupils' attainment are accurate and can be used with confidence to measure progress and set challenging targets for pupils.
- Ensure that all curriculum leaders are fully equipped to monitor standards of attainment and the quality of teaching and learning in their respective subjects.

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

Standards by Year 6 are in line with national averages and improving. The school took appropriate action when assessments at the end of the last school year showed that rates of progress were not good enough and that writing was a weakness throughout the school. Evidence in lessons and in books shows an increasing proportion of pupils working at or above the expected level in this area. There is a particularly good improvement in the standards of writing of boys in Key Stage 1. Their skills are now much closer to those attained by the girls. Writing standards in Key Stage 2 are also improving. Pupils with learning difficulties generally make the same progress as the rest. Pupils with disabilities make good progress and benefit from the school's accurate understanding of their needs and strong links with parents. In some areas of the school, assessment data are not secure, which limits the ability of senior leaders to set challenging but realistic targets to measure progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are keen learners, attend regularly and behave sensibly. They enjoy school. One boy expressed the views of many when he commented, 'The school has changed a lot since it was a first school, but it is change for the better.' Pupils are confident that staff will help them if they have a problem and their knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy is good, demonstrated by their healthy lunchboxes and high levels of participation in sporting activities. Pupils have a strong empathy towards those in need of help and understand well how their fund-raising helps communities both locally and around the world. In lessons and in extra-curricular activities they show how well they can work cooperatively and contribute to decision-making. For example, pupils have made a major contribution to the recent design of an outdoor classroom. These skills prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The work in pupils' books and on display supports the school's view that the quality of teaching is improving. Indeed, during the inspection there were examples of outstanding practice. Pupils respond with enthusiasm in lessons where the teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan activities that offer just the right amount of challenge. In these lessons, clear and accurately pitched learning objectives meet the needs of all groups of pupils. Interesting practical activities and probing questioning extend pupils' thinking. However, too much teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is no better than satisfactory because it gives insufficient consideration to the needs of high and low attainers and tasks are set that do not build upon previous learning and experiences. When this happens, lower ability pupils are unsure of the purpose of the lesson and sit passively as the learning moves at the pace of the more able. The contribution of highly skilled teaching assistants is a positive feature in most classes. They are well prepared and acutely aware of the potential difficulties the pupils they are working with may face during the lesson.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has not received the same focus from senior leaders as the drive to improve teaching and learning. However, provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT is satisfactory, and phase leaders have established some links between subjects that enable pupils to apply these important skills throughout the curriculum. Much stronger is the contribution that enrichment activities make to the pupils' enjoyment of school and their personal development. A high proportion of pupils enjoy the exciting range of after-school activities that cater for sporting and other interests. Links with the local church, a school in France, the Bewdley Development Trust and charities both at home and abroad help secure good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school successfully meets its aim of creating a safe and secure environment in which the pupils can develop and achieve. Parents are very pleased with the way the school promotes their children's welfare, and procedures for safeguarding pupils' well-being meet requirements.

Pastoral care is particularly good. Adults respond very sensitively to pupils' needs and circumstances, and provide very effective care for the most vulnerable pupils and those with disabilities. Good links with a range of outside agencies ensure that help is at hand if there is a need for additional guidance. Staff keep a watchful eye on the impact of medical or personal issues on an individual's attainment. At its best, marking is regular and helpful but it is not sufficiently consistent in helping pupils see clearly how to meet their individual improvement targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Over four terms, good leadership by the headteacher and governors has successfully established a shared vision for the school and its main priorities for development. Supported by an increasing number of effective subject leaders and a committed staff, for many of whom working in a primary school was a new challenge, standards and teaching are improving. Governors are enthusiastic and, through their range of committees, scrutinise all aspects of the school's work. They ask challenging questions of school leaders because they are determined that this new school will develop into an outstanding one.

School self-evaluation is accurate and it recognises that there remain significant areas for improvement to secure better outcomes. Included in these is the awareness that at present not all subject leaders are fully equipped to monitor standards of attainment or the quality of teaching and learning in their respective subjects.

There are good links with a range of partners. These add greatly to the care provided for pupils, the rich range of curricular experiences and the good understanding pupils have of being part of a school, local and global community. The great majority of parents are supportive of the school although a small number have concerns about the amount of homework set.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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	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 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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

29 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anne's CofE Primary School, Bewdley, DY12 2UQ

Thank you for welcoming the team to your school and being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed our inspection and want to share with you what we thought about your school.

You receive a satisfactory education. Standards by the end of Year 6 are average and your achievement is satisfactory. To improve your progress, we would like all lessons in school to be as good as the very best ones. In the Reception classes, children are making good progress and are on course to reach above expected standards. In the rest of the school, you make satisfactory progress. We have asked the staff to make sure that all the assessments they make of your progress are accurate so that they can use these to plan work that is just right for you and can easily measure the gains you are making. This will help speed up your learning.

Your headteacher is clear about the steps to take to improve your school. He works well with your effective governing body. At present, not all subject leaders are able to give a strong lead in their curriculum areas. This is something we have asked the school to develop in order to raise standards further.

You told us you enjoy school and we are pleased that your attendance is above average. It was good to see how successfully you can work in groups, sharing ideas and listening carefully to one another. You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and really enjoy the range of after-school activities. You are particularly fortunate to have opportunities such as horse riding, a visit to Belgium and arts projects to enjoy, as well as many sporting clubs. We were also very impressed to learn of your fund-raising activities, your Fair Trade Club and your links with a local nursing home.

We appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. We trust you will help the headteacher and staff to continue to improve the school. We wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Anthony O'Malley

Her Majesty's Inspector