

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100950
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	323384
Inspection dates	5–6 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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 aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	326
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	Mr Stephen Kirrage
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Sheehan
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Underwood Road London E1 5AW
Telephone number	020 7247 6327
Fax number	020 7377 5024

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	5–6 February 2009
Inspection number	323384

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school, which is larger than average, has Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the Early Years Unit. A very high proportion of pupils come from one of 82 different minority ethnic backgrounds, the largest group being Brazilian. Just over a third of pupils speak English as an additional language, a large and increasing proportion. Almost half the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is very high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Many of these have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. A large number of pupils join and leave the school outside normal times. Among others, the school has the Schools Preventative Education and Drugs Intervention Award and the Local Authority Extended Schools Quality Assurance Award. A privately run after-school club operates on the site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St. Anne's is a good school. Aspects of its work are outstanding, as it cares for its pupils extremely well. Through an exciting and relevant curriculum, it contributes considerably to their outstanding personal development and well-being. Inspirational leadership from the headteacher, very ably supported by her deputies, has forged a tight-knit team that works together very well. Teaching and learning are good. However, there are some inconsistencies, especially in the pace of learning, when sometimes too much time is spent introducing a lesson, and in the level of challenge for more able pupils. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work. Speaking for many, one wrote, 'My children are always excited to go to school in the morning'.

From starting points in the Early Years Unit that are below what is expected, children make good progress overall and attain standards at the end of Year 6 that are broadly average. Pupils with learning difficulties do particularly well. However, not enough pupils attain the higher levels in English and science because they are not always given sufficiently challenging work to do. The rate of progress is fastest in the Early Years Unit and in Year 6, and more variable in other year groups. Analysis of performance data has improved in recent years, and teachers are held increasingly responsible for the progress of the pupils in their classes. Team leaders work effectively with individual teachers to ensure that any pupils who are at risk of falling behind are identified quickly and measures are put in place to support them.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent, and they show respect and tolerance towards one another. They develop very positive attitudes to learning and are eager to take part in lessons. They cooperate very well and support one another as partners and buddies. Pupils take plenty of exercise, including salsa dancing, and make healthy choices. They know all about the perils of illicit drug-taking and smoking, and the damage excess alcohol can cause, and have obtained an award in this area of healthy living. They are active in their local community, with particularly strong links with the neighbouring church. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, and the vast majority attend well. They develop a love of learning, as well as the basic skills they need to succeed at secondary school.

The impact of leadership and management on pupils' academic progress and standards is good and there is a good capacity for further improvement. A programme to develop the leadership skills of middle managers is proving successful in giving them the confidence to take on additional responsibilities. Much work has gone into promoting the school's caring ethos based on Catholic values, ensuring that pastoral care is outstanding and that pupils are valued as individuals. Excellent provision for pupils who find learning difficult means that they make very rapid progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. Marking is consistently effective at pointing out the next steps in learning. The school makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion, reaching out to its own and to other diverse communities. Governors support the school well, and play an active role in its development. However, they do not always consider the longer-term implications of their decisions, for example in maintaining high levels of staffing.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the Early Years Unit with a wide range of skills and abilities generally below those expected, especially in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. Achievement has improved recently. Children now make outstanding progress because of a stimulating and exciting range of activities and highly effective teaching that takes full account of their interests and aptitudes. Their personal development and welfare are given the highest priority so that they settle quickly and are happy and safe. Parents are encouraged to stay with them for part of each morning to join in with the activities. This helps to build excellent relationships with home. The extremely spacious accommodation is very well organised into areas of learning, with children able to access two different outside areas. Staff know the children's needs very well, and make regular and detailed assessments of their progress. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding, with staff collaborating in planning a wide range of tasks and reflecting on their practice. Very skilful questioning helps to move children's thinking along, and full access to the excellent range of resources promotes their independence. By the time they leave the Early Years Unit, most children are reaching or even exceeding the expected standards for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching so that all of it is good or better by injecting pace and matching work more closely to pupils' abilities.
- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in English and science by challenging them appropriately.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are broadly average in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. While all pupils achieve well overall, the rate of progress is slower in some classes than in others. Pupils make the most progress at the start and end of their time in school, with recent improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage leading to outstanding achievement in 2008. Those pupils who stayed seven years in the school and left in 2008 did very well, with particularly good progress in Year 6. However, high mobility means that most pupils join the school later, or leave earlier. Pupils who enter the school speaking little English are supported very well to get established and quickly become fluent. Also, pupils who find learning difficult or who have behaviour difficulties, make outstanding progress as a result of the intensive support they receive. The progress of more able pupils is not consistent, so that the proportion attaining the higher levels in English and science is below average by the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have a very strong sense of right and wrong, and are sensitive to one another's needs. As one pupil said, 'In this school we make wise choices but now and again we slip up'. Pupils have an excellent understanding not only of their own cultures, but also of the full panoply of cultural experience locally and globally. For example, they have been studying Australian Aboriginal culture in depth. Pupils say they feel safe at school and would turn to an adult if they had a problem.

They keep fit, taking at least two hours exercise per week and enjoying daily five-minute workouts. Pupils support their school community as school councillors and buddies, and contribute greatly to the life of their local parish. They raise money for the homeless, and undertake joint projects with pupils from schools that have very different populations from their own. Pupils regularly help out at a local city farm. Pupils have established close links with local companies, who supply sponsorship and reading partners to enrich their experiences and teach them about the world of business. Pupils grow in confidence and independence during their time at the school and are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is often engaging and involves pupils well. Teachers plan carefully, and mostly take account of the full range of pupils' needs and abilities. This is particularly the case for those pupils who find learning difficult or who have behaviour problems. Sometimes, however, the work set is not challenging enough for the more able pupils, and their progress slows as a result. Good use is made of technology to move learning forward and to motivate pupils. A strong emphasis on speaking and listening skills results in pupils being articulate and able to express their views coherently. High levels of staffing ensure that pupils receive plenty of attention and keep class sizes relatively low. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, enabling all pupils to take a full part in lessons. Occasionally, too long is spent introducing the lesson, so pupils do not have enough time to practise their skills or finish their tasks.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school's adoption of the International Primary Curriculum has had a very positive impact, making pupils enthusiastic about learning and giving them a global perspective. For example, pupils have been finding out 'how we can stop the world tearing apart our rainforests'. They have plenty of opportunities to practise their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects, and use information and communication technology very effectively. A group of pupils, in collaboration with another school, produced an animated film on the theme of 'different yet the same', which excited and enthused all those who made it and those who watched it. Pupils go on plenty of visits to places of interest, including London Zoo and the British Museum. They benefit from tuition in guitar playing (for all of Year 5) and salsa dancing (for all of Year 6), as well as learning modern foreign languages. The curriculum contributes considerably to pupils' excellent personal development and their great enjoyment of school. The school has won an award for its provision of extended learning through before- and after-school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an extremely wide range of pastoral and academic support for pupils, including a counsellor, nurture groups and play therapy. Pupils make rapid progress in reading and numeracy recovery classes. An excellent induction programme ensures those pupils new to the school, especially outside normal times, settle in quickly. There is outstanding provision

for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Pupils with learning or behaviour difficulties do extremely well, because of the high levels of support they receive. 'Think it through' sheets help pupils to consider the wisdom of the choices they make and the impact of their actions upon others. All safeguarding arrangements are in place. There is very effective academic guidance for pupils, with marking showing them what they need to do next to improve. All pupils know their targets and work hard to achieve them. The school does all it can to promote attendance with a wide range of incentives and regular bulletins to parents, so that most pupils attend well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's passionate vision for the school is very well supported by the deputies and a committed and dedicated staff team. Leadership is most strongly evident in the school's friendly family atmosphere and in pupils' excellent attitudes to learning. One parent commented, 'I am very happy with my child's progress and her total feeling of well-being in the school environment'. Steps to distribute leadership roles more widely have been successful, with an energetic team of middle leaders taking on more responsibility and leading teams of teachers well. Leaders recognise that different teachers have various ways of presenting data about pupils' progress and setting targets for them, and are working towards developing an agreed approach that standardises this process throughout the school. Self-evaluation is effective, based on robust monitoring, so that the school has identified the right priorities for improvement. The school reaches out extremely effectively to its local community, for example by employing a Portuguese-speaking teaching assistant to work with Brazilian pupils. It also engages extensively in projects with other schools so that pupils of different faiths and cultures mix and learn together. The governors are effective in their everyday support for the school, but do not take a sufficiently strategic view when planning for the longer term.

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
--	-----------------------

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 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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

23 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School, London, E1 5AW

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed meeting you and agree that yours is a good school. These are some of its strengths.

- Your behaviour is excellent and you make wise choices most of the time.
- You have a very good understanding of how to stay healthy and keep safe.
- Learning is exciting and interests you.
- You go on plenty of visits and work with pupils from different schools.
- The teaching is good and helps you to make rapid progress in your work.
- The school cares for you extremely well, especially if you find learning difficult.
- The school is led and managed well.
- The youngest children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Unit.

We have asked your teachers to make sure you always have enough time to practise your skills in lessons and to finish your work. We have asked them to give plenty of hard work to those of you who find learning easy, so that you do really well, especially in English and science. You can help by continuing to work hard and by letting your teachers know how well you think you are doing.

Thank you once again for your help. Our best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mr N Butt

Lead Inspector