

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103434
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	323824
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Krishan Sharma

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	177
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	Conor Murphy
Headteacher	Bernadette Keenan
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Lowe Street Birmingham B12 0ER
Telephone number	01217 725037
Fax number	01217 530732

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school situated in an inner city neighbourhood of Birmingham. Although established to serve the Catholic community, currently Catholic pupils represent a small minority. A large majority of pupils come from a diverse range of ethnic groups and 7% are of White British origin. The number of pupils for whom English is not their first language is well above the national average as is the number known to be eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The area that the school serves records a high level of deprivation and the pupil mobility during the school year is high. The school has a thriving breakfast club run by the school staff. Most children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with a level of skills below those expected of four year olds.

The school has gained the National Healthy Schools award and holds an Activemark for its work in promoting physical education and fitness.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Anne's Catholic Primary is a satisfactory school. The provisional results of the 2008 national tests testify that it has high expectations for its pupils. A large majority of parents are very satisfied with its provision. As one parent notes, 'In my opinion St Anne's have given both of my children a great education and good start to life.' The partnerships that the school has established with others are working well for the benefit of its pupils.

Children make a sound start in Reception. Although they make satisfactory progress overall, their attainment on entry to Year 1 is generally below average. Standards are on target to remain close to the national average in 2009, particularly by the end of Year 6. Although standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 point to a better than satisfactory progress for the 2008 Year 6 cohort, the current lack of consistency in progress within both key stages adds up to a satisfactory achievement overall. The continuing focus on literacy is improving the rate of progress in reading and writing across the school, which is particularly beneficial to the pupils for whom English is an additional language.

The quality of teaching and learning is generally satisfactory. It varies across the school and accounts for the uneven progress made by some pupils as they move through the school. When teaching is effective, it ensures that the needs all groups of pupils are catered for. On the other hand, when it is less successful, some pupils, particularly the more able pupils, do not always progress as fast as they should. The curriculum is sound and there is a good range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities that not only add to pupils' enjoyment but also extend their learning. The arrangements in Reception do not yet ensure that children receive a balanced programme of activities and that each child is formally assigned a key worker.

Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy being at school, feel safe and behave well in and around the school. Because of the good pastoral care, pupils gain confidence and learn to form good relationships. Academic guidance is satisfactory overall. Teachers' marking does not always give clear messages to pupils about how to improve their work. Although most pupils see the value of targets set for them, some are unclear about how they help them to improve their work.

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have identified the right priorities for the school. Under their guidance, the school has secured the necessary improvement since the last inspection. The school's checking systems are good enough, in general, but they are insufficiently rigorous in evaluating the impact of teaching on learning. The middle leaders are enthusiastic about their role but their monitoring and evaluation skills are not sufficiently well developed for them to form a firm view of how developments in their subjects are working. Governors are supportive of the school, and together with the senior team, they are committed to moving the school forward. While the school's recent improvements to its academic performance show it has satisfactory capacity for making further improvement, strategies adopted are not yet fully embedded.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress overall. Their achievement in the early literacy and numeracy skills, particularly in linking sounds with letters and counting, is better because of the priority given to their teaching. They achieve less well in some other areas, such as knowledge and

understanding of the world. Because of the limited outdoor opportunities, the children are not able to explore, investigate and use their natural curiosity as often as they need to. Their good personal development is a strength. Adults ensure that children are provided with opportunities to play individually as well as with others. They learn to behave well and ensure others' and their own safety. There is not enough balance between activities that are chosen by children and those that are led by adults. The imbalance sometimes results in restricting opportunities for pupils to learn independently and make choices. Adults in the Reception class show good care for children and provide a safe environment for them to learn and develop, although arrangements for allocating a key worker for each child are not yet in place. The teacher in charge of the Reception class is recently appointed and has plans for its future development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching through lessons that provide the right level of challenge for all pupils, especially more able pupils.
- Increase the rigour in the school's checking systems to iron out inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make across the school.
- Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation skills of staff with management responsibilities.
- Provide greater opportunities for Reception children to initiate their own activities and assign each of them a key person as required by the recently introduced standards for the EYFS.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The provisional results from the 2008 national tests show a marked upturn in both key stages and represent at least satisfactory achievement and broadly average standards. The Year 2 pupils matched the provisional national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The Year 6 pupils also matched the provisional national averages in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has also risen considerably. The current tracking data and pupils' written work show that progress is continuing to accelerate but not for all pupils and not in all classes due to the inconsistent quality of teaching. Although an increasing number of pupils throughout the school are now working at, or close to, the national average, some of the more able make relatively slower progress than others. As a result of the school's stronger focus on literacy through numerous intervention programmes, achievement and standards are often better in English than in mathematics. Pupils with additional learning needs make at least satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good and has improved since the last inspection. Most pupils enjoy being at school and find their lessons interesting. They behave well and move safely in and around the school. Pupils assured the inspectors that when unacceptable behaviour occurs, the school deals with it effectively. Pupils relate well to each other and adults in the school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. They learn about different religions, but their understanding of the cultural diversity in the wider community is not as strong as the other three aspects. Attendance fluctuates; it remains below, but is often close

to, the national average. The school is continuing to promote vigorously the value of regular attendance. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. They have a keen sense of fair play and willingly raise funds for good causes in the community. Pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are gradually improving in order to equip them satisfactorily for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning vary across the school but are satisfactory overall. This inconsistency contributes to the uneven progress some pupils make as they move through the school. In all lessons, pupils' behaviour is good and they relate to each other well. The teaching assistants provide effective support to those with additional needs. In the better lessons, the teaching makes lesson intentions clear with plans for activities that match the needs of pupils of all abilities, particularly the more able and those with English as an additional language. As a result, all groups of pupils achieve their best. In these lessons, teachers are also well aware of how pupils are progressing. The pace is lively so as to maintain pupils' interest throughout. In the mainly satisfactory lessons, the teachers' intentions and the tasks they set limit the challenge for pupils. Consequently, some of them progress at a slower rate. Occasionally, teachers do not fully make clear the learning that should result from an activity. When this happens, pupils do not know how to assess their success.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Planning for the curriculum ensures that the national requirements are met. The focus on literacy and numeracy skills is an appropriate response to the needs of pupils in this inner-city school. However, the planning does not always provide the challenge for all of them to achieve their best. A regular provision for personal, social and health education, the social, emotional aspects of learning and first-aid training enhances pupils' personal development. The addition of Spanish as a modern foreign language has added enjoyment as well as a European dimension to the curriculum. Since its last inspection, the school has taken effective steps to improve links between subjects, particularly with literacy. Educational visits, including residential ones, visitors and a good range of extra-curricular activities are effectively contributing to pupils' enjoyment and learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils' pastoral care is good. Arrangements for ensuring health and safety, child protection and risk assessments are in order. Pupils feel safe and know that they will be listened to. Systems for reducing the absence rate are in place, but have had only a modest impact and the school is aware of the need to redouble its efforts in working with a small number of parents involved. Pupils feel that their voice is heard through the school council. Academic guidance given to pupils is mainly satisfactory. Pupils with additional needs are well catered for. Marking and targets set do not always provide the precise guidance or incentive for pupils to improve their learning. In the best examples, teachers diagnose pupils' mistakes and point out how the work could be improved.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior leaders and the governors are committed to improving pupils' achievement and their personal development. Current priorities are the right ones and have led to early gains in the most recent national results. The school is becoming more ambitious in setting challenging targets for itself. However, it has some way to go before it has a secure base in order to sustain the recent gains. The effectiveness of the school's checking systems is somewhat reduced by the lack of sufficient rigour in evaluating the quality of teaching and pupils' learning in lessons, in their written work and through the use of data. In general, however, the school knows its strengths and weaknesses. The middle leaders are keen to lead developments in the areas of their responsibility, but their checking skills are not yet sharp enough to enable them to make a full contribution. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion by extending its boundaries to the local and global communities through its various networks. The governors are confident enough to act as critical friends, but they are not fully aware of the current inconsistencies in 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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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	3
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

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?	3

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	3
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	3
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**

3 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, B12 0ER

Thank you for welcoming us into your school. We enjoyed being in your classrooms, looking at your work and talking to you about it. There are many good things about your school. Here are some of them:

- Children in Reception get off to a sound start in school.
- You behave and get on well with each other.
- You care about your community and show your concern for others, here and abroad, by raising funds to help good causes.
- Your teachers and other adults in the school take good care of you.
- You enjoy taking part in after-school activities.
- Your governors and your headteacher, Mrs Keenan, are determined to make the school even better.

This is what we have asked the governors and the headteacher to do to improve your school:

- Improve teachers' skills so that they make sure all of you are challenged by the work given to you, especially those of you who are capable of doing much harder work.
- Improve the skills school leaders need to keep a close check on the work of the school to ensure that it helps you to make the best possible progress.
- Make sure that staff in the Reception class give children more freedom to choose their activities and a particular person that they can always relate to.

Yours sincerely Krishan Sharma Lead inspector