

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110003
Local Authority	Reading
Inspection number	325077
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Vivienne McTiffen

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)	207
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	Ms Theresa Moran
Headteacher	Mrs Kait Feeney-Nash
Date of previous school inspection	7 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Washington Road Caversham Reading RG4 5AA
Telephone number	01189 015537
Fax number	01189 015538

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Anne's Catholic Primary is slightly smaller than average. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is higher than most schools and of those who speak English as an additional language is just above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has risen in recent years to be currently above average. Most have moderate learning or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Reception class. The school has achieved several awards, including Healthy School status and Activemark accreditation.

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 gives a satisfactory standard of education and is improving. The level of pastoral care offered to pupils is one of its strengths. Parents overwhelmingly agree that children are safe and well cared for. One parent commented, 'We wanted our children to go to a school where they are encouraged to enjoy their learning and the moral and spiritual ethos is the foundation for everything - St Anne's has fulfilled that.' Pupils enjoy coming to school. They have a well-developed understanding of right and wrong, and awareness of the diverse cultures in school and the local community that supports their good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils benefit from the school's many links with others, which enriches the range of experiences on offer and prepares them well for the next stage of education.

The school recognises that more needs to be done to raise standards and is making good use of external expertise. This, together with improved teaching, is beginning to have an impact and there is evidence of accelerated progress, especially in the junior classes. The most marked improvement is in science where a good proportion of pupils achieve the higher levels and standards are above average. This is due to better planning and assessing and developing staff expertise. Similar gains are being seen in English because good use is made of outside support to raise the profile of reading and writing across the school and establish a more consistent approach. Although not enough has yet been done to improve writing, standards have risen to be broadly average. In mathematics, although the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels has increased, standards remain below average.

Pupils' satisfactory achievement is due to satisfactory teaching. Although, where teaching is good, there are pockets of good progress, there is not enough consistency between classes. In the better lessons expectations are high and pupils know what to do and how to behave. As a result, pupils present their work neatly and concentrate well. However, particularly where teachers do not share the intended outcomes of lessons, pupils are unclear about what they are doing or why, and their attention wanes. In some classes work is insufficiently matched to various abilities, resulting in some pupils, especially the more-able, completing their work quickly because they find tasks too easy. This means these pupils do not make enough progress because they are not sufficiently challenged.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is dedicated to promoting the school's caring ethos and values pupils and staff alike. She recognises individual qualities and is keen to ensure staff development, although formal procedures for helping teachers improve are not rigorous enough. Progress has been made in developing the confidence of subject leaders to lead and evaluate their subjects. However, they do not take enough responsibility for raising standards by monitoring teaching and learning, or setting challenging targets. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Recent initiatives are accelerating achievement, which confirms the school's capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children enjoy the activities on offer. They willingly participate and sustain good levels of concentration. During the inspection they enthusiastically engaged in the theme of holidays, where they packed their suitcases and made passports in the role play area. Early reading and writing skills are developed satisfactorily through the teaching of letters and sounds. Staff

build caring and positive relationships, leading to good personal development. As a result, children work and play cooperatively, taking turns and sharing equipment. The majority behave well and show a good awareness of others. They self-register on arrival and quickly form friendship groups. Generally children are able to choose what they will do but a few are not sufficiently directed to engage in a range of activities. Chances for all children to access computers are limited. Use is made of the outdoor areas, but children's free access is restricted due to the limitations of the building. However, a building programme is in place to address the shortcomings of the outdoor facilities. Induction arrangements are praised by parents, who are kept regularly informed of their child's learning and welfare. The school has rightly identified the need to ensure that the Early Years Foundation Stage is more effectively managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching by ensuring greater consistency and sufficient challenge for all pupils, especially the more-able.
- Ensure managers at all levels take responsibility for setting challenging targets and effectively monitor provision.

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

Achievement is satisfactory and standards average. The majority of children enter the Reception class with skills and understanding expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress so that, by the time they enter Year 1, they reach expected levels, although for some reading, writing and calculating skills are underdeveloped. During their time in the Infant classes pupils make satisfactory progress to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 2, except in writing which remains below average. Although there has been a fluctuating picture over time due to staff instability, the school's most recent data indicates that, by the end of Year 6, pupils reach broadly average standards in all subjects, but improvements are being seen, especially in science. A greater proportion of pupils reach the higher levels in mathematics and science, indicating improved achievement, although not enough pupils gain the higher levels in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make similar progress to their classmates because they are suitably supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils concentrate and participate well in lessons. They display positive attitudes to learning, showing care and respect for each other, and have good relationships with adults. They feel listened to and believe that adults look after them and sort out any concerns they may have. Behaviour in classrooms and around school is good. Pupils understand why a good diet and exercise are important for a healthy lifestyle and are aware of how to keep safe, due to projects such as 'The Road Safety Show' and anti-bullying week. They accept roles of responsibility willingly and those involved in the School Council feel their contributions are valued. Pupils like being independent and many enjoy the chance to undertake research in the library and by using the internet. Trips and clubs, which include drama, cricket and knitting, are greatly

enjoyed. Pupils develop suitable skills in preparation for the future world of work and work well together well when given the chance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Staff establish positive relationships with pupils who consequently enjoy learning. Pupils respond favourably to lessons that are exciting and motivate them, especially when teachers make creative links between subjects. For example, during the inspection, pupils provided thoughtful and imaginative responses to their reactions in discovering the tomb of Tutankhamen. They made good progress in their historical understanding which led to good use of language, both verbally and written. This is because they had opportunity to express their views and work with a partner. However, in some classes these opportunities are too limited. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in supporting learners, especially those with specific and behavioural needs, although sometimes assistants are not as involved as they could be, especially during lesson introductions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Planning ensures sufficient coverage of numeracy, literacy and science. The current focus on raising standards in English, especially writing, has led to pupils writing for a greater variety of purposes. Younger pupils benefit from learning how to link letters with sounds, leading to improved reading skills. However, the approach to developing speaking and listening is inconsistent and pupils do not get enough chance to contribute in lessons and share their opinions with each other. For older pupils computers are used well to carry out independent research in history, geography and religious education, and to extend their writing. The school is adopting a more creative approach to curriculum-planning, allowing for greater linkage across subjects, and some good examples of this can be seen, especially in literacy. Links with other schools and teachers extend the curriculum. Involvement in performances such as 'The Tempest' and musical concerts raises self-esteem and confidence, allowing talents and skills to flourish. This has a positive effect on personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides good pastoral care for its pupils. Good arrangements ensure pupils remain safe and appropriate risk assessments are carried out. Day-to-day supervision of pupils is good. Pupils feel safe because adults listen and respond to their concerns. Pupils new to the school are helped to settle quickly. Healthy School status and Activemark accreditation have helped to raise pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Teachers have the best interests of the pupils at heart in their daily work. There has been some good recent work on improving academic support, and teachers are making better use of marking and target-setting to help pupils understand how to improve their work. This practice is not consistent across the school or in different subjects. Consequently, pupils are not always clear about the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

After a period of instability and staff reorganisation, the school has identified clear directions for improvement. Good use is made of outside expertise to help staff focus on what needs to be done to raise standards. This has supported the current improvement, especially in science and English. Managers have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through effective self-evaluation. Analysis of how well pupils are doing is carried out, but this data is not sufficiently well used by leaders at all levels to help them judge the progress of specific groups of pupils. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. It is aware of the diversity of its population and governors are actively involved in nurturing links with the wider community and parents, many of whom are keen to be informed about pupils' learning and how they can help. Governors support the school well and are increasingly effective in monitoring its work.

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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	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	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?	3
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

16 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Reading, RG4 5AA

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited you recently. We noticed how much you enjoy what the school has to offer and we were interested to see you at work in lessons. We particularly liked talking to you about your computer work.

Your school is satisfactory overall, with some things that are good. Your school looks after you well. Staff help you to understand what is right and wrong and to respect each other. You all get on well together and take on roles of responsibility that are helpful to the school. We were impressed by the progress that some of you are making, especially in science where older pupils are doing well. We are pleased that the school's efforts to help you improve your reading and writing are also starting to show in your work.

However, we think you can do even better, especially in writing and mathematics, so we have asked the school to make sure all teachers help you to make good progress. We want all teachers to give you work that is not too hard or too easy, but just right for your abilities. We have asked the adults who are managers to make sure they know how well you are doing so they can help you improve and set targets for you to reach.

We hope your work gets better and better. We are sure you can help the school, especially if you continue to concentrate in lessons and behave as well as you can.

Yours faithfully

Vivienne McTiffen

Lead Inspector