

St Anne's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104104
Local Authority	Solihull
Inspection number	336235
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Kerr

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Stuart Hill
Headteacher	Mrs Marie Conway
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at safeguarding procedures, local authority monitoring reports, school improvement plans and 50 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of pupils, especially in writing for boys
- how new teachers are settled in
- the school's plans for promoting community cohesion
- provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

The school serves the Parish of St Anne's which is situated in an area of social disadvantage. It has recently undergone a successful merger with its neighbouring parish school, increasing its capacity to a two-form entry of 60 pupils each year. A new school building is due for completion in the summer of 2010. Some temporary accommodation, including an outdoor learning area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, has been provided in the interim.

Most pupils are from White British backgrounds; approximately ten per cent are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Many new teachers have been appointed since the last inspection. The school has gained the National Healthy Schools standards and the Bronze Eco-school Mark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Since the previous inspection St Anne's has been transformed. With the exception of satisfactory provision for community cohesion, all aspects of provision and outcomes are now at least good. Some significant features are outstanding. Key among these is the leadership and management of the headteacher and senior leaders. The governors supported the headteacher well in her determination to appoint the best possible teachers during the recent amalgamation. Many of these are recently qualified, but this has not compromised the quality of teaching. The senior management team has worked effectively with all teachers to ensure that learning is effective. Pupils have therefore made good progress so that standards in Year 6 are now above the national average. Together with their good personal development, this prepares the pupils well for secondary school. A key strength of the school is its ethos. All staff are enthusiastically committed to the school, and the pupils are exceptionally well-behaved and keen to learn. Excellent arrangements are made for the pupils' care and guidance and all staff and pupils feel that everyone has equal opportunities to succeed. Non-catholic pupils, those from ethnic minorities or joining the school from elsewhere and pupils whose home language is not English are all fully integrated and well-supported. Pupils at risk of underachieving are quickly identified and given effective support. The outstanding progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities from Year 2 to Year 6 testifies to the success of this approach. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and appreciate its inclusiveness. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved and is now good, but with temporary arrangements for outdoor learning. Children make good progress from below average starting points on entry to Nursery and most meet or exceed what is expected of them by the end of Reception. Less confident children are supported very effectively by the Nurture Group to ease their transition into Year 1.

The thought given to providing interesting as well as challenging lessons is reflected in high levels of enjoyment and hard work among pupils. For example, a teacher motivated Year 5 pupils to make their best attempts at drawing a guitar by using video clips of pop stars playing guitar music they liked. Writing is encouraged and valued, for example in the many attractive displays of work around the school. The quality of writing is good overall, but not as good for boys as for girls, especially among the more able. The school recognises this and is continuing to adapt its approach to improve boys' writing. The school has many useful partnerships within the community, but has not yet done enough to develop links with groups from wider cultural and faith perspectives.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

- Improve the standard of writing for boys so that it is more in line with their reading skills, especially for the more able by:
 - placing more emphasis on extending and improving pupils' spoken language
 - spreading the good practice that has already improved boys' writing in some parts of the school
- Strengthen the school's provision for community cohesion by:
 - widening its partnerships to include a variety of cultural and faith perspectives
 - ensuring a more secure knowledge and appreciation among pupils of the range of faiths and cultures represented in the wider society

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' achievements are far better than at the last inspection. Attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly average. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in each year group so that standards at the end of Year 6 are now above the national average. The rate of progress from Year 2 to Year 6 is significantly better than in many schools. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities made exceptionally good progress in 2007/2008 (the last year for which there is validated data) because of the support put in by the school. The only area of relative weakness in test results is boys' writing, especially for the more able. In the school's data for 2009, for example, considerably more girls than boys gained the higher Level 5. However, better attainment by boys than girls in writing in some lower year groups indicates the increasing success of the school's measures to improve boys' writing. There is no evidence of underachievement among any particular group of pupils, including minority ethnic groups. Those joining from other schools often have lower starting points but catch up because of the good support. The pupils' enthusiasm for school is exceptional and their behaviour often exemplary. They are very reflective and sensitive to each others' needs. Their appreciation of the dangers they may face is exceptional and they feel very secure and well-cared for in school. Their participation in the school community is developing well, for example in presenting a mathematics evening for parents, and there are high rates of participation in active and healthy extra-curricular activities, including sports, dancing, cooking and gardening. Pupils feel that they are treated equally, regardless of background. They appreciate that there is a range of cultures and religions in the wider world, but their knowledge of how these relate to their own culture and beliefs is too limited. For example, there is little awareness among pupils of the similarities between Christianity, Islam and Judaism. This is already recognised by the school as an area for improvement.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

A key feature of lessons is meticulous planning based on an accurate assessment of the pupils' needs. This systematic approach has helped promote consistency of learning across the school during an understandably disruptive amalgamation. Pupils' sustain interest and concentration in lessons because teachers use a wide variety of techniques in presenting lessons and engaging the pupils in their own learning. Lessons are often made relevant to the pupils' own lives and computer technology is widely and confidently used. For example, a video clip was shown in Year 5 of a builder asking for the pupils' help in drawing up replacement plans for the new school. This motivated them to attempt their own plans. Teaching assistants and volunteers work closely with teachers and make a valuable contribution to ensuring progress for all pupils. Relationships in the classroom are excellent and humour is often a feature of lessons. Recent developments to the curriculum have increased the opportunities for pupils to work on projects that link subjects so that they learn flexibility whilst developing their knowledge and skills. There are ample opportunities for physical exercise in PE and in sports and dance clubs after school and the school encourages healthy eating through lunch-time food options. The pupils know how well they are doing through teachers' marking and the targets they are given. They are well-looked after if ill or injured and given good guidance and support for the transition to secondary school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are particularly well-catered for. Their needs are accurately assessed and they are given support to make up lost ground. This has led to much better than average gains for these pupils from Year 2 to Year 6 in recent years.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, ably supported by senior staff, has provided outstanding leadership to steer the school successfully through a potentially traumatic school amalgamation. Not only has disruption to the pupils' learning been minimised, but all aspects of provision have been improved. All the staff share an ambitious vision for the school and do their utmost to meet the high expectations placed on them. Through rigorous but supportive monitoring of teaching and learning, senior leaders have succeeded in raising the quality of lessons so that pupils' make good progress throughout the school.

The school enjoys a high standing with parents, in the local community and within the local authority, being selected as a model of best practice for the effective use of assessment to improve pupils' progress. All available help is sought to meet individual pupils' needs as they arise, from extra lessons for gifted and talented pupils to support for those finding school difficult in any way. The school's planning for the next year reflects a realistic appraisal of its shortcomings as well as its strengths and provides a clear way forward. Governors ensure good value for money in spending on the school. They are aware of how well the pupils are doing through regular headteacher reports and help to maintain high expectations. They ensure that the school meets all its statutory obligations, particularly in respect of the safeguarding of pupils. A sound plan is in place to promote community cohesion. This works well at a local level but both staff and governors are aware that more is needed to fully prepare the pupils for life in a wider cultural context.

The high morale among staff, excellent leadership, good teaching and an established trend of above average achievement by the pupils contribute to the schools good capacity for continuing improvement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good improvements have been made to the Early Years Foundation Stage since the last inspection. The children are learning well. Their attainment on entry to the nursery is below what is commonly expected overall. Good progress is made, but by the end of reception, attainment is still a little below average. The children are in a good position to start the National Curriculum in Year 1 because they have enjoyed their time in school and are confident learners. Those children that are still lacking in confidence or are somewhat behind in their development are well-supported by the nurture group and gradually assimilate into the main school. The children are encouraged to eat healthily and to enjoy their learning through play. On some occasions, there is a little over-direction by staff, but by and large, children are encouraged to follow their imagination and interests. The activities are well-structured so that specific outcomes such as an interest in books, co-operation with each other, talking, writing and counting are encouraged. The temporary outdoor area, although not adequate to meet the full range of the children's needs, is used to best effect. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader ensures good management of the provision and has established ambitious aspirations that are shared by all the staff. Excellent relationships between staff and parents and carers are a great help in ensuring the children's safety, progress and enjoyment of school.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They particularly appreciate the way it helps individual children whatever their background or needs. The school had conducted its own parental survey shortly before the inspection. This explains the comparatively low return on the Ofsted questionnaire. The responses to the school questionnaire returns mirrored those in the inspection returns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Anne's RC Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 350 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	70	14	28	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	8	10	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	33	66	16	32	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	64	16	32	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	68	15	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	66	17	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	68	16	32	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	30	60	19	38	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	62	19	38	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	56	21	42	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	52	24	48	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	70	15	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	70	12	24	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



30 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anne's RC Primary School, Chelmsley Wood, B37 5DD

Mrs Brigstock, Mr Hastings, Mr Shears and myself enjoyed our visit to your school immensely. We were very impressed with your hard work and the way you get so much enjoyment out of school as well as getting good marks in your SATs. I particularly enjoyed the dancing display some of you put on in the Wednesday junior assembly. Some of the gymnastic moves were amazing. Well done! You do well throughout the school and your teachers and other staff look after you very well indeed. You also impressed us with your knowledge of how to keep safe and to live a healthy life. You look after each other very well and were very interesting and grown-up in the way you talked to us. We think your teachers and the other grown-ups who help you in class do a great job. Your headteacher is an exceptionally good leader and has an excellent team supporting her. We think there are just one or two things that the staff and governors could do to make school even better for you. Here they are:

- we think that some boys could write even better, so we have asked teachers to find ways of helping them to do this.
- we think that more should be done to help you have a better understanding of the beliefs and customs of people in different parts of your country and abroad.

We would all like to wish you, your families and all the staff at St Anne's every success in the future.

Yours faithfully

Peter Kerr

Lead Inspector

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