

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111347
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	325359
Inspection dates	29–30 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Margot D'Arcy

The inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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)	232
Government funded early education provision 0 for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage	
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to under 3 years	41
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr E Smith
Headteacher	Mrs S Fau-Goodwin
Date of previous school inspection	March 2006
Date of previous childcare inspection	May 2008
School address	Wellington Road Nantwich CW5 7DA
Telephone number	01270 625100
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, looked at pupils' work and held discussions with governors, staff, pupils and parents. They observed the school's work and looked at its assessment data, pupils' individual education plans and monitoring and evaluation documents; 69 parental questionnaires were analysed.

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

- pupils' achievement in mathematics, particularly that of boys and the more able pupils
- how well the school provides for and promotes the achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning to speak English as an additional language
- pupils' understanding of diversity within the community and how it impacts on their lives
- how efficiently resources are used, and the strength of leadership and management at all levels, including governance
- the achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and how effectively the provision for them is led and managed.

Information about the school

The school is slightly smaller than average, but numbers have increased significantly since the last inspection and the roll continues to rise. A higher than average proportion of pupils join the school other than at the usual time of admission. The surrounding areas from which the school draws its pupils are generally more favourable socially and economically than nationally and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is low. Most pupils are of White British heritage; a small proportion is from minority ethnic groups and some of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

The school has gained a number of awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark; National Healthy Schools Award, Investors in People, Activemark, Football Association (FA) Charter Mark, Inclusion Quality Mark Gold Award and the Financial Management in Schools Award.

The governing body manages a number of extended services, including a toddler group, a before and after school club that includes children who attend the Early Years Foundation Stage, and a pre-school Nursery. The toddler and Nursery provision are on the school's site but operate from a separate mobile building. Many of the Nursery children transfer to the school's Reception class along with children from a variety of other pre-school settings. The before and after school club operates from the school hall and is also open during the school holidays.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

St Anne's is an outstanding school. The significant strengths in many areas of the school's work, including exceptional care, guidance and support, enable pupils to flourish both academically and personally and to reach high standards.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage progress well. This is due to the good, and sometimes outstanding, quality of teaching and the provision of very appropriate activities matched to children's individual needs and different stages of development. Both the school and extended provision are led and managed well but separately, with liaison between the two managers being mostly informal. There is no divergence in terms of what each manager sees as good practice, but there is no cohesive approach to the leadership of this key phase so there are some differences in systems, for example in recording assessment and the allocation of key workers.

Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 outstanding teaching and the school's good curriculum ensure that pupils' overall rate of learning and progress is excellent. As a result, the standards attained by pupils leaving Year 6 are significantly above the national average. Over time, standards in mathematics, although well above average, have not always been as high as those in English and science at the higher Level 5. The school has taken successful action to address this disparity and standards in mathematics have improved. Pupils' current work and the school's own tracking data shows that there is no notable variation in the achievement of boys and girls or different groups of pupils in this subject or others.

Pupils' behaviour, both in class and around the school, is exemplary and in lessons this makes a strong contribution to the quality of their learning. Pupils speak very positively about how much they enjoy lessons in all subjects. Many particularly appreciate the opportunities for independent and practical work such as exist in science. The impact on pupils' progress is clearly evident in the extremely large number attaining Level 5 in the Year 6 science tests. While curriculum opportunities for pupils in both key stages include a range of practical work, there is scope for further improvement in Year 1 where the curriculum is too formal. The result is that at times this limits pupils' learning and understanding of complex or abstract ideas. The opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills in real-life situations and conduct mathematical investigations have increased as a result of the school's action to improve mathematics, but there is still scope to extend work in this area. There is good provision for information and communication technology (ICT) although technical problems beyond the school's control sometimes limit the learning opportunities for pupils.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding. The headteacher's vision for excellence is shared by all and backed up by rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work. These are firmly embedded and effectively deployed among senior leaders and other leaders and managers. The impact is very evident; recommendations for improvement identified at the last inspection have been successfully addressed and established strengths have been built upon further. Governors add to this picture of excellence. All in all, this very positive picture of leadership and management shows that the school has outstanding capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Establish more cohesive leadership of the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that there are regular, formal opportunities for the managers of each type of provision to meet and agree upon unified and consistent systems and practices, as appropriate to the needs of the children.

- Improve the quality of the curriculum from good to outstanding by ensuring that:
 - the learning experiences for pupils in Year 1 build more effectively on those experienced in Reception and take better account of how children of this age learn
 - pupils have more opportunities to use and apply mathematical learning in real-life scenarios
 - issues linked to technical problems with ICT are resolved with the server provider as soon as possible.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make outstanding progress. Pupils rise exceptionally well to the challenging work they are given in lessons, showing high levels of concentration and enjoyment and a mature and level-headed approach to tasks. A very pertinent example was seen in a Year 5 art lesson. Without losing for one moment their burning enthusiasm to start work on a group task to illustrate legends, pupils demonstrated impressive initiative in discussions to decide upon means of acquiring visual information and to allocate leadership and other roles for this work. For the most part, throughout the school, learning is highly successful. It dips very occasionally when the pace of lessons does not match the speed with which pupils pick up new ideas.

High standards in the main subjects of English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 are the norm and are set to rise further. Rates of progress are consistently excellent, improving year on year in national tests and clearly evident in pupils' current work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, respond very successfully to well-targeted

intervention programmes and support in lessons. Their progress is tracked meticulously and the end result is their excellent progress in gaining skills and confidence. Pupils at an early stage of learning English make very good progress in their acquisition of the language. Their rapidly developing comprehension and speaking skills were seen in their very good attention in lessons and keenness to answer questions.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily. They expound the benefits of a balanced diet and regular exercise, and recognise the need for sleep and the impact worrying might have on their mental health. There is very good uptake by pupils of healthy meals and snacks at lunchtime and of the wide range of sport-related extra-curricular activities. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. Pupils' clear knowledge of how to deal with issues they might experience in their lives, such as cyber bullying, also reflects an excellent awareness of ways that they can keep themselves safe. Pupils undertake many roles to contribute to the school's work, including play leaders, road safety leaders, reading buddies, and through involvement in the school council in raising awareness of sustainability through self-organised recycling initiatives. They show very good moral and social awareness and understanding of beliefs, customs and cultures different from their own. While pupils clearly value the richness of diversity, they are acutely aware of the negative impact of issues such as prejudice, racism and exploitation in the world. Pupils arrive punctually and the attendance of most is above average. However, the increasing number of pupils who are being taken out of school for family holidays has resulted in some decline this year.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	1
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers' very secure subject knowledge and highly effective use of assessment supports meticulous lesson planning. They are very successful in their aim to ensure a consistent level of challenge for all, including targeted support for pupils with different needs. Lessons almost always move along at a brisk pace. Teachers incorporate a wide range of methods to motivate pupils, keep them interested and

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

address different learning styles. Questioning skills are well pitched and show teachers' very good knowledge of individuals. Highly effective use is made of new technology, such as interactive whiteboards, to enhance explanations and demonstrations. The main role of most teaching assistants is in delivering intervention programmes outside the classroom. Here they are used efficiently and make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress. During the infrequent times when teaching assistants are deployed in a supportive role in lessons, their impact is less effective because they are not always clear about the best ways to promote pupils' learning. Teaching assistants who are specifically deployed to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are completely clear about their role and conduct it very effectively. Teaching staff are vigilant in ensuring that pupils who are learning English as an additional language are fully included in lessons and, where necessary, provide picture and non-verbal cues to support and extend their understanding. Marking is thorough, frequently linked to targets and ensures that pupils are given clear information on how to improve their work. Pupils are included very well in the assessment process, evaluating how well they have achieved learning objectives and their targets.

The curriculum underpins pupils' learning well. Good links are made between subjects and there are significant strengths in provision for the arts. The very strong focus placed upon the provision of practical and investigative work in science has an outstanding impact, enabling pupils to reach exceptionally high standards. In mathematics, a more structured approach to calculation and investigation is proving very effective in raising standards but there is still more to be done to increase pupils' understanding of the use and application of mathematics in everyday life. The curriculum provides very good enrichment, for example through the provision of Spanish for all year groups, drama workshops, educational visits and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils' understanding of cultural diversity and the impact of international events is promoted well across the curriculum and enhanced by a residential visit for Year 5 who explore the concept of 'shared earth' through art, dance, drama, music and storytelling. The curriculum for pupils in Year 1 is too formal. It does not build well enough on the ways in which the children are used to working in Reception or take enough account of how children of this age learn. At times, this limits the depth of pupils' understanding of abstract concepts and inhibits the development of independent learning skills.

There are rigorous systems to keep pupils safe and excellent programmes to promote their personal, social and emotional development. These aspects, together with staff's detailed knowledge of pupils as individuals and their success in establishing friendly and trusting relationships with pupils, are central to the outstanding quality of care, guidance and support provided. Pupils' individual needs are astutely identified and their progress carefully monitored. Where necessary, individualised work and behaviour programmes are devised, regularly reviewed and modified to ensure that pupils make the best progress possible.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2

The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1
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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, other leaders and governors are dedicated to providing pupils with the very best. Ensuring that pupils achieve their academic potential and develop into well-rounded individuals is what this school is all about. Expectations are high and the headteacher and her very effective senior leadership team monitor the school's work rigorously and regularly. A strong team of governors brings a wide range of expertise and adds much to the excellent way that the school is led and managed. The drive to improve is fuelled by rigorous self-evaluation. The school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. Policies and practices to prevent discrimination are rigorously adhered to. Those to promote pupils' health, well-being and safety are robust and updated regularly in response to evaluation of their impact from staff training and information from pupils and parents; all current government safeguarding requirements are met. The school is promoting community cohesion well. It has conducted a thorough audit of how it promotes cohesion within the school, local and wider communities and this provides a clear view of the way forward to extend its strategy further. The school uses its budget and other resources efficiently to enhance its provision and ensure excellent outcomes for its pupils. As such, it provides outstanding value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The youngest children in the toddler group are happy, well cared for and receive lots of adult contact and stimulating activities appropriate to their age. The setting has beds for the children who wish to sleep, although the accommodation is limited in terms of the space available for them to do so undisturbed. Pre-school children in the Nursery are given very good opportunities to develop independence and to enjoy learning, both indoors and on the large grassed area outside. Children have lots of opportunities to learn through first-hand exploration of the wide range of resources and activities initiated by themselves or led by adults. Continuous assessment of children's progress in all areas of learning feeds into a comprehensive profile of their development. Their health is promoted well through the provision of very healthy

meals and snacks and there are rigorous procedures to keep them safe. Recommendations from the setting's last inspection have been addressed.

When children start in the Reception class their skills are generally above those typically seen for their age. They make good progress so that by the end of the year the vast majority are working securely within the learning goals set for them nationally and many children are exceeding these. The Reception classroom and outdoor area is a hive of activity. In this well-planned stimulating environment the children are given endless opportunities to use all their senses to explore the world around them and learn through play, though there is no sacrifice to challenge. Staff have a very secure understanding of how young children learn and are skilled in knowing exactly how to intervene in children's self-initiated play to take their learning forward. Staff also plan and lead challenging play-based activities that enable children to understand complex and sophisticated ideas. A very good example was seen when children were required to estimate the length of different-sized teddy bears against a non-standard measure, record their estimations simply, then check how close they were. Ongoing assessment is used very well to inform the planning of activities for groups and individuals. In the context of the already good leadership and management of Reception and the extended provision, greater liaison between the two managers would enable a more cohesive approach, given that all of the provision for children in this phase is now the responsibility of the governing body.

The needs of all Early Years Foundation Stage children attending the before and after school clubs are met and there is appropriate liaison between the staff who manage the clubs, and children's teachers.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the way the school cares for and educates their children. Praise from parents of children with individual needs is immensely positive. Many parents took time to add comments to the questionnaires they returned to reinforce the strength of their positive views, which are endorsed by inspection evidence. Almost no concerns were raised, but the few that were centred mainly on the condition of the playground and playground supervision. Inspectors found no evidence of a lack of supervision in the morning or at lunchtime and the school has plans to improve the playground in the near future. A typical parental comment was, 'The school has a lovely warm feeling and everyone involved is very passionate about what they are trying to achieve.' This echoed the views of many and reflected the inspection findings.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Anne's Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, they were asked to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children. The inspection team

received 69 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 143 parents and carers of pupils registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	14		

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
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.



1 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Nantwich, CW5 7DA

Thank you for your warm welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed our time at St Anne's enormously, particularly the discussions that we had with many of you. You are clearly very proud of your school and have every right to be so. You will be pleased to know that we judged St Anne's to be an outstanding school. There are so many good things about your school it is difficult to pick out just a few. However, we were extremely impressed by your excellent behaviour and maturity and to see how well you enjoy your lessons and work so well cooperatively. You are taught extremely well by your teachers and are given a wide range of learning opportunities. As a result of all this, you achieve highly in your work and become thoughtful, caring and responsible individuals who show concern for the world and the people in it.

All of these good things are made possible because the people who lead your school, such as your headteacher, other managers and the governors, work extremely hard to give you the best education possible. They do an outstanding job in this and are continually looking for ways to make things even better. We have agreed with your school on two improvement issues that would be particularly useful to focus upon. One relates to the curriculum. This is good at the moment, but we believe it could be as outstanding as other aspects of the school's work. To help achieve this we have asked your school to make sure that the children in Year 1 have more opportunities for practical work; that you all have more opportunities to apply what you have learned in mathematics to real-life problem solving situations and to fix the ICT problems you experience as soon as possible. The other area that we have asked your school to look at is to ensure that the teachers who lead and manage the Reception class and Sunflowers have more opportunities to meet and plan how they can work together.

With very best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Margot D'Arcy
Lead inspector

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