



St Anne's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114220
Local Authority Durham
Inspection number 289840
Inspection date 4 October 2006
Reporting inspector Sue Hatton HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Warwick Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Bishop Auckland, County Durham
Age range of pupils	4-11		DL14 6LS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01388 603359
Number on roll (school)	208	Fax number	01388 606420
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Debra Swinburn
		Headteacher	Mrs Beth Atkinson
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector had discussions with the headteacher and talked with groups of children, staff and governors. The responses to a parental questionnaire were analysed. All classes were visited and break time, lunchtime and assembly were observed. The inspector looked at a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan. The inspection also takes account of national data to compare the achievement and progress of this school's children with those in similar schools.

Description of the school

St Anne's is a smaller than average primary school which is oversubscribed. A small number of children, less than one in ten, claims free school meals. There are fewer children from minority ethnic backgrounds and fewer with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than in many schools. Most children start school with skills that are average or slightly above. The school has achieved the Activemark award and is working towards Healthy Schools status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school places an equal emphasis on children's academic and personal development. It is successful with both. Children enjoy school, behave well and attend regularly. They work and play together amicably. They are ready to celebrate each other's achievements and to support and help anyone experiencing difficulty. They are making an increasingly significant contribution to the school and the wider community. Most parents have nothing but praise for the school. They recognise, rightly, the strong family atmosphere in which children are encouraged and supported to do their best.

Pupils consistently reach standards that are above or well above the national average and usually make good progress. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education. In 2005, however, not all pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 made the progress that the school expected of them, particularly in writing. The school quickly identified the reasons for this. It took swift, well-targeted action. For example, teachers supported boys with their writing by engaging them in more discussion about the purpose of their writing and what they might like to say. They also increased the emphasis on the practical use of mathematics. As a result, both the standards reached by pupils and the progress that this represented improved in 2006. The school has already made some improvements in the way it uses assessment information. It recognises that it needs to track pupil's progress more rigorously throughout the school to ensure that any underachievement is picked up early and acted on promptly.

Good teaching and an interesting, relevant curriculum make a significant contribution to the standards achieved by the pupils. Teachers know their children well. This means that they can set work that meets their needs and catches their interest. Teaching assistants provide effective support for individuals and groups. However, pupils are not always clear how to improve a piece of work or what they are aiming for in the longer term. All members of staff are highly committed and provide good quality care for pupils. The standards reached and the quality of provision in the Reception class are good.

The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has recently increased. St Anne's has formed links with a nearby special school and both benefit from the sharing of expertise, resources and facilities. The school has worked closely with external agencies and is developing its own expertise to meet their needs. These pupils make good progress.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is relatively new. She is building successfully on the school's existing strengths and involving staff, governors, children and parents in reaffirming the school's vision and securing a common sense of purpose and direction. Together with senior managers and governors she has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need improving. They have already had some successes and, together with improvements made since the last inspection, this shows that the capacity for further improvement is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Put in place a system to make sure that children's progress against their targets is tracked at regular intervals so that any underachievement is identified early and prompt action taken.
- Make sure that children understand the next steps in their learning and that teachers' marking consistently provides clear guidance on how to do better.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in school. By the end of the Reception class most meet, and a few exceed, the learning goals expected for children of their age. At the end of Year 2, standards are slightly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, standards are consistently well above average in English, mathematics and science. All groups of pupils make generally good progress based on their prior attainment except in 2005, when some children did not reach the high levels expected of them by the school. Work in pupil's books and the records kept by the school confirm that variations in the rate of progress in other years, are the result of the characteristics and composition of specific year groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupil's personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. They have positive attitudes to school and work hard in lessons. They are friendly, polite and well behaved. They recognise various forms of worship such as praise and reflection. They have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. This is reflected in the interest they take in what is for lunch and in the contents of their packed-lunch boxes.

The children are pleased with their efforts to raise money for an adventure playground and are looking forward to its installation. They also raise money regularly for charities. Pupils are proud to be members of the school council and recognise its growing contribution to the life of the school, for example, in preparing for the Healthy Schools award. Older pupils were quick to volunteer for training to be 'buddies' for younger children during playtimes. The high standards achieved in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and their well developed ability to work together prepare pupils very well for the next stage of their education and for life after school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The pupils' high standards and good progress are the result of good teaching. Relationships between teachers and children are based on mutual respect. Pupils are keen to participate in and contribute to lessons. Most lessons are well planned and move along at a brisk pace with pupils consolidating and extending their skills and understanding. Increasingly teachers are encouraging children to evaluate their own work.

Teaching assistants make an important and effective contribution to pupils' learning, for example, by leading and joining in money games or being involved in activities to develop the physical coordination and movement of pupils with learning difficulties. They keep pupils on task and help to develop their thinking, speaking, reasoning and listening skills. However, occasionally they are asked to oversee the completion of worksheets by pupils and this is not the most effective use of their expertise.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a broad and relevant curriculum that meets the needs and interests of pupils. The teaching of French is well established and the school is involved in a project to ensure a smooth progression when pupils go on to secondary education. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of additional activities and out-of-school clubs including links with other local schools. A great emphasis is placed on educational visits and visitors to broaden pupils' experiences and provide good opportunities for them to use and develop their skills in reading, writing and ICT. Children recall these with obvious enjoyment. The school ensures that pupils are introduced to, and develop an understanding of, cultures other than their own.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Staff are highly committed and provide good quality care for pupils. Procedures for safeguarding children are in place. In this supportive environment, children achieve high standards and develop positive attitudes to their work. Most reach challenging targets. However, the school knows that it needs to improve further its use of assessment information to set targets for pupils and then track their progress more rigorously. The quality and effectiveness of marking is not consistent. Where it is good, it provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The positive impact of leadership and management is seen clearly in the progress that pupils make in their academic achievements and in their personal development. Senior managers and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and know that the monitoring of pupil's performance needs to be improved. Governors have a good range of expertise and are strong supporters of the school.

Parents are very supportive of the school. They feel well informed about what is being taught and the progress that their own child is making. The headteacher and governors are actively seeking to enhance further the school's links with parents.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 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.

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

The Children

St Anne's CofE Primary School

Warwick Road

Bishop Auckland

County Durham

DL14 6LS

4 October 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed being in your school very much. I learned a lot about the school by talking with members of the school council at lunchtime. I also talked with many of you before school, during lessons and at break time. You helped me to understand how your school works.

I am pleased to tell you that I agree with you – St Anne's is a good school!

You enjoy your lessons. You work hard and reach high standards. You behave well and are friendly and kind to each other. You like the adults who work with you. Your parents told me that this is a caring school. The main aim of all the adults in your school is to give you a good start in life. They always encourage you to do your best.

Those of you on the school council are right to be proud of the work you do. You told me that the headteacher is keen to listen to your ideas. The staff and governors also have some good ideas about how to make the school an even better place for you to be.

I have asked your school to:

- keep even better checks on how well you are learning so that if you have any problems these can be picked up quickly
- tell you what you need to learn next and help you to understand how you can improve.

With very best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hatton HMI