

St Annes CofE Lydgate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105689
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	324255
Inspection date	8 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Keith Bardon

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 controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	204
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	Cllr Pat Lord
Headteacher	Mrs Dawn Watson
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Cedar Lane Grasscroft Oldham Lancashire OL4 4DS

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	8 June 2009
Inspection number	324255

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The following issues were investigated: standards and achievement; personal development and well-being; teaching and learning; leadership and management, and aspects of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Evidence was collected from: the school's self-evaluation; national published assessment data; the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of the school at work; interviews with senior members of staff, governors and pupils; and the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This average-sized primary school draws its pupils from a wide area with a mix of social and economic characteristics. Relatively few pupils are eligible to take a free school meal. While most pupils are White British, one in ten is from a minority ethnic background, with pupils of Pakistani heritage making up the largest group. Some of these pupils speak English as an additional language but none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but the number with a statement for their special educational need is high for a school of this size. There are substantially more boys than girls. A Reception class provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A privately managed before- and after-school club is available to pupils in term time and the same organisation runs a play scheme during the school holidays. These did not form part of this inspection. The school has achieved a number of awards, including Healthy School and Activemark. Since it was last inspected the school has had a new headteacher, who took up the post in September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Anne's is a good school. Pupils receive high-quality care, guidance and support and make outstanding progress in their personal development. Pupils' achievement is good because they are taught well, work hard and are keen to learn. They enjoy school thoroughly and develop confidence and independence in the school's strong family atmosphere. Most parents hold positive views of the school, describing it as having, 'a very welcoming and caring attitude towards its pupils', and one they, 'would recommend to any parent'.

From a starting point that is broadly as expected for their age, pupils make good progress in building on their knowledge, skills and understanding. By the end of Year 6, standards are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The content of pupils' writing is often very good. Well-chosen sentence openers, a wide vocabulary and creative use of punctuation make their work interesting and enjoyable to read. However, pupils' handwriting and presentation are often not of the same quality and the school's policy that all pupils from Year 2 onwards will use a joined up style of writing is not adhered to closely enough. This detracts from the quality of pupils' written work in all subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive very effective support and guidance, well matched to their individual needs. Tasks are modified to ensure their full participation and they make good progress towards their individual targets. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are included fully in all activities and their achievement is good. The predominance of boys in several classes has focused the school on their attainment. The initiatives that have been put in place are proving successful and boys are making similar good progress to the girls.

Teachers give careful thought to the content of their lessons, planning interesting activities which challenge pupils to think hard and arrive at their own solutions to problems. Lessons are generally matched well to pupils' differing abilities and move along at a good pace. Pupils are keen to learn and are becoming increasingly adept at judging for themselves how well they are progressing towards their individual targets. Teaching assistants play a full and effective part in lessons, often supporting those who need a little extra help with new ideas. A minority of parents have concerns about the continuity of teaching and learning. While the school accepts that there have been some difficulties, inspection evidence shows that leaders have put effective measures into place and that pupils have made good progress.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and they mature into well-balanced, caring and thoughtful individuals with a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils from different home backgrounds get on extremely well together, working and playing in complete harmony. They show very strong social responsibility and take considerable pride in what they are able to achieve together. Contributing to the school and local communities comes naturally to them and their appreciation of environmental issues, such as problems caused by plastic bags, is excellent. Many take regular exercise and try their best to eat healthily because they are totally convinced this is the right thing to do. They have no concerns about bullying, feel totally safe and secure in school and show an excellent appreciation of how to take care of themselves when out and about. Behaviour is excellent, both in and out of class. Pupils are respectful to adults and show extremely positive attitudes to school and to learning. Most attend regularly and attendance is above average. Regular opportunities to participate in enterprise schemes give pupils a thorough understanding of money management. This, along with the good basic skills and excellent personal characteristics, prepares pupils extremely well for future learning and life.

The recently reviewed curriculum is well structured and provides interesting opportunities to learn, which pupils find enjoyable and stimulating. Pupils can choose from a wide range of extra-curricular activities with something to interest everyone. Music is a particular strength with a large number of instruments on offer, as well as singing in the choir. Staff care for pupils extremely well and provide them with highly effective support and guidance. Pupils' personal and academic progress is monitored rigorously and effective steps taken to match provision to need. This close attention to the needs of each individual enables pupils to make good progress, ensures equal opportunities for all and eliminates any possibilities of discrimination. Procedures for safeguarding meet government requirements. Community cohesion is good. The school contributes well to the local community through its close links with the church and involvement in many local events and projects. This has included the recent refurbishment of the on-site community bungalow, which is providing additional facilities for parents and children. Links with communities further afield have been established and are starting to be developed. Excellent links are forged with other schools and organisations, which support pupils' development and enrich their education very well.

The school is led and managed well. Clear thinking by the headteacher and senior managers and rigorous monitoring of the school's performance provide a solid platform for development. The school has made good progress since it was last inspected and is well placed to continue to improve. Challenging targets are usually met. Senior staff and subject leaders have received well-structured training and make an effective contribution to school management. However, while they are measuring the performance of the school accurately, many managers are still learning how to make the very best use of this performance information in making overall evaluations. Governors have increased their effectiveness since the last inspection. They provide good support for the school, check its work carefully and provide additional challenge to help it improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join Reception from a number of nursery settings. Their skills and knowledge at this point vary widely but are broadly typical of the age group. They are taught well in an environment which is lively and interesting; as a result, children make good progress. By the end of Reception, most pupils are working securely within and sometimes exceeding the expectations for children of this age. Children enjoy excellent relationships with staff in a warm and supportive atmosphere and make rapid progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They behave extremely well, make choices confidently and follow routines and instructions carefully. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well and close attention is paid to children's care and welfare. Good improvement has been made to outdoor provision since the last inspection and children enjoy a wide range of enjoyable experiences as they move freely between the classroom and colourful outside area. As part of their current topic about farms, children are using a ride-on tractor to move bales of hay and are building a cow shed from a variety of materials. As well as helping their physical development, such activities encourage children to think creatively and share their thoughts and ideas with others. They appeal to boys, in particular, and help to narrow the attainment gap between boys and girls. Good relationships with parents and with the many pre-school settings children attend, smooth children's entry into Reception. As a result, they make a secure start to school and quickly become effective learners.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen school self-evaluation procedures to ensure that managers at all levels are evaluating the work of the school precisely and making the very best use of the information they are collecting.
- Raise expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation and apply the relevant school policies consistently.

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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?	2
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of St Anne's C of E Lydgate Primary School, Oldham, OL4 4DS

Thank you very much for the friendly greeting you gave the inspectors when we inspected your school recently. Lots of you smiled and chatted to us, which made us feel comfortable and welcome. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do, and special thanks go to those who talked with us about the school.

St Anne's is a good school and I understand fully why you enjoy it so much. There is a lovely family atmosphere and I was very encouraged by how well you all get along. Your personal development is outstanding. I was very impressed by the way you work together and help each other in class, and how confidently you set about the challenging problems teachers set. This shows an excellent attitude to learning and does you a great deal of credit. Your behaviour is excellent and you can be very proud of the way you grow into sensible and caring young people.

The progress you make is good because you are taught well and work hard. I thoroughly enjoyed reading what you had written in your books. It was interesting, well put together and showed a good choice of words and punctuation. I was a little disappointed with the quality of some of the handwriting and presentation, which did not always do justice to what you had written. Your teachers agree with me that this could be improved and will be helping everyone to become fluent and neat writers. You can help by always taking as much pride in your handwriting and in the presentation of your work as you do in what it says.

Staff take extremely good care of you and I know you appreciate all the help and guidance they provide. You get to take part in many extra activities and it is excellent that so many of you join in them regularly. Teachers who lead the school make regular and careful checks of how well it is working. I have suggested that some of the ways they do this need to be a little sharper to make best use of the information they collect and help you all to make even better progress.

Thank you once again for a very enjoyable day and best wishes for the future.