

St Anne's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114220
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	338318
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Scott

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Debra Swinburn
Headteacher	Mrs Beth Atkinson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 14 lessons, taught by eight teachers. They observed other activities, including assemblies and play times, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They analysed the school's documentation, data on pupils' progress, welfare arrangements and the 153 questionnaires that were returned by parents and carers, as well as those from Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

- the continuity of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the extent of pupils' progress through Key Stage 1
- the consistency and extent of teachers' expectations of all groups of pupils, especially boys
- the impact of the school's recent focus on the quality of pupils' writing
- the effectiveness of self-evaluation at all levels of management in developing the school.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized school. Nearly all pupils are from White British families; a few come from minority ethnic families. A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below average. Two of the school's teachers are currently on maternity leave and are due to return shortly. The school holds a number of awards, including the Activemark for Sport, the Healthy Schools Award and the International Schools Award. A childcare facility, Buddies, operates on the school's premises, but is privately run and is subject to a separate inspection.

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

This is a good school. It provides a caring and encouraging environment in which pupils develop high self-esteem, an excellent understanding of healthy living and personal safety, and a good sense of community. The Christian ethos and the variety of learning experiences are very effective in boosting pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Attendance is consistently high. Standards are rising, especially in Key Stage 2, and pupils achieve well. The school's leadership is well focused on school improvement and has done well to minimise the impact of some unavoidable staff absences. There are effective links with the local community and parents think well of the school.

Pupils develop into mature and considerate individuals. Despite some lapses, behaviour is essentially good and often excellent among the older pupils. These pupils adopt a sensitive seniority and carry out responsibilities with ease and calm authority. In lessons, their very positive attitudes enable swift learning. This is not always the case for younger pupils, although any lack of motivation is found in lessons which are not challenging or interesting enough. Overall, teaching is good. Some is satisfactory but it is often outstanding, notably in Years 4 to 6. In these classes, the warm, supportive atmosphere, the lively tempo of learning, the rich curriculum and high expectations by teachers combine to galvanise pupils and generate a genuine desire to learn. Pupils' pride in their work is palpable. Such attributes are much less apparent in other classes. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science; this represents good progress over time. The school has done well to narrow the gap in attainment between boys and girls, and to raise standards in writing. Recent improvements to children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage have been interrupted by changes to staffing, although their progress is satisfactory.

The clear and aspirational leadership of the headteacher, well supported by senior staff and governors, has ensured that the school's development is cohesive and effective. Good awareness of the school's strengths and its shortcomings mean that appropriate priorities for improvement are identified and accompanying action plans are effective. Occasionally, evaluation is not sufficiently balanced to ensure swift and decisive change. Even so, the raising of standards, improved communication with parents, staffing management, and improved aspects of pupils' personal development show the school has good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress so that it is consistently good in all year groups by

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ensuring that:

- all teachers have routinely high expectations of all pupils
- the skills of the most effective teachers, especially those in Years 4 to 6, are used more effectively to demonstrate and reinforce good practice.
- Ensure that the recent improvement to children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is re-established and fully embedded.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are eager to learn and to be at school, as their excellent attendance record attests. For the most part, they concentrate well in lessons, are respectful of adults and other pupils, and work very productively alone or in groups. Sometimes, though, when teaching is not engaging enough, pupils' attention wanders. This is especially true of the younger pupils. However, the generally good behaviour and positive attitudes by pupils help to explain why overall achievement is good and standards have been improving. There has been a distinct upward trend in recent years in standards at the end of Year 6; the picture is very similar this year. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. From their starting points, this represents good progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live safely and healthily. Pupils take up sporting opportunities eagerly and succeed in local competitions. They take a pride in having healthy lunchboxes. Through a highly successful buddy system, Year 6 pupils pair up with children when they start school to provide a mantle of care and guidance in how to look after oneself. This camaraderie creates impressive social bonds and awareness of others. Excellent spiritual and cultural development is produced by thought-provoking assemblies, some awe-inspiring lessons and increasing links overseas. Pupils develop community responsibility within school but are not fully aware of the broader communities within the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2

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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The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall but particularly so in Years 4 to 6, where it is often excellent. Classrooms here are vibrant, exciting and inspiring places to be. Pupils respond readily to the high level of expectation and the rich curricular aspects that flavour lessons. For example, dramatic photographs of the recent volcanic eruptions in Iceland, together with an on-the-spot commentary from a university researcher, gave pupils in Year 6 a wealth of technical vocabulary and expression to improve writing skills; as well as providing fascinating geographical insight and a sense of awe. Work is carefully planned to cater for the different abilities of pupils. Guidance is plentiful and shrewd. Excellent advice is given to pupils, for example, on writing techniques; marking is thorough, informative and very well balanced. It is a natural consequence that pupils' presentation of work is meticulous. These key elements of teaching and learning are not, however, the norm in other classrooms.

The school maintains a strong focus on the core subjects, although there is some inconsistency. The curriculum is at its most effective in the better lessons and teachers are innovative in their planning of literacy and numeracy. For example, the stirring Alfred Noyes poem 'The Highwayman' rapidly improved the word power and expressiveness of Year 5 pupils. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were asked to solve demanding problems without any instructions and relished the challenge. Teachers are increasingly adapting the curriculum to link subjects, set learning in real-life situations and to use hands-on, practical activities; the provision for art, physical education and French is especially effective. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 make very good use of their tablet computers. Pupils in general are keen to take up the many activities after school.

The quality of care for pupils is good. Formal systems are efficient and up-to-date and all staff are very mindful of pupils' physical and emotional well-being. The more vulnerable pupils are well supported by the school, together with outside agencies, as appropriate. In their questionnaires, several parents praised the approachability of staff. The management of behaviour is good but there are times when staff do not deal with the occasional disrespect or foolishness decisively enough. The promotion of attendance

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is excellent.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The shared vision and leadership at all levels underpin the school's drive for improvement. The determined leadership of the headteacher is a key factor. The excellent classroom skills of the deputy headteacher and senior teacher have already been used to improve teaching across the school. However, the school is well aware that more needs to be done. The governing body is knowledgeable, supportive and keeps a close eye on school development. All statutory requirements are met, including the stringent requirements for safeguarding pupils. For example, all adults who work with pupils are thoroughly vetted and risk assessments are comprehensive.

Monitoring of the school's work by the senior leadership team is regular and the accompanying evaluation is mostly effective. For example, it was recognised that the curricular time for geography was being squeezed by other subjects; this has been rectified. Some judgements about standards and teaching, though, are not sufficiently balanced and sometimes provide a slightly generous perspective. The school vigorously promotes all aspects of equality and has succeeded in reducing disparities, such as boys' attainment.

The school has done well to strengthen its partnership with parents and carers. The website is informative and current; the new texting service provides regular contact. Some parents support learning in the classroom. Links beyond the school certainly benefit pupils' development, in such ways as gardening advice from nearby allotment gardeners and coaching from a local sports partnership. The school has carried out a good analysis of its provision for community cohesion and has a clear action plan. The church is an integral part of school life, with a Sunday School once a week; staff expand pupils' horizons with links in France and Tanzania. However, the school is aware of the need to acquaint pupils more with the varied communities within the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in children's progress in the Reception class. A new leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage provided a stimulus that resulted in attainment that was above expectations of five-year-olds. With the temporary absence of this teacher, there has been an unsettled period of staffing and the momentum in improvement has slowed. As a result children's progress is satisfactory. Attainment is below age-related expectations but this represents satisfactory progress, in view of children's starting points. Usually, attainment on entry is typical of four-year-olds.

Children have settled well over the year, although not all are fully aware of routines. Nevertheless, they behave well, respond positively to the range of activities in and out of the classroom and maintain effective concentration. Resources are good and there is a suitable blend of directed teaching and child-initiated activities. However, the activities are not planned skilfully enough to challenge children consistently well and build quickly on existing skills, especially in early writing and mathematical development. Guidance by staff is often good, but is not always prompt enough to show children how to maximise learning opportunities.

Children's welfare is a high priority and the quality of care matches that found elsewhere in the school; effective links with parents support this. The school's leadership has done well to minimise the impact of staff changes this year and is well aware that it needs to rekindle the qualities that had begun to improve the provision.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A high percentage of questionnaires were returned. Most parents and carers have a positive view of the school. In their comments, they praised in particular the warm and supportive ethos, the quality of teaching and resultant progress by their children, the approachability of staff and the overall level of care. The inspectors agree with these views. A few parents and carers expressed concern about the unsettled staffing in the Reception class. The inspectors consider their concerns understandable but judge that provision is satisfactory and that the school is in a good position to improve matters in the near future. Most concerns centred on the management of behaviour, especially of younger pupils. The inspectors acknowledge that there are behavioural issues among a very few pupils. They judge that staff generally respond to such situations decisively and appropriately but not necessarily on every occasion.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Anne's CofE 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 153 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 207 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	88	58	61	40	4	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	96	63	57	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	70	46	77	50	6	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	77	50	71	46	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	71	46	80	52	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	39	89	58	3	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	76	50	75	49	1	1	1	1
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)	67	44	75	49	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	73	48	71	46	6	4	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	41	73	48	17	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	59	39	86	56	7	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	80	52	69	45	4	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	86	56	63	41	4	3	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



11 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anne's CofE Primary School, Bishop Auckland, DL14 6LS

I am writing to thank you for the part you played in the recent inspection of your school. My colleagues and I enjoyed getting to know your school. Your thoughts and contributions certainly helped us to gain a clear picture of St Anne's.

We think that yours is a good school. We were especially impressed by the way in which you respond to the many opportunities, the quality of care and the respect that staff give you. You clearly have an excellent understanding of how to look after yourselves and others, and lead very active and healthy lifestyles. You are sensible, kind and become quietly confident of your own abilities. Behaviour is good overall, but not always. Your attendance is excellent; you obviously relish coming to school.

We were pleased that standards have improved by the end of Year 6, even in writing which had been a bit of a problem. You make good progress from when you start school. This is because teaching is good, particularly in the upper part of the school. We saw how motivated you were in some lessons when the topics were fascinating, teachers set you challenging tasks and then gave you lots of helpful advice and encouragement. We would like you all to make the same good progress, so we have asked the school to make sure that all lessons are equally good.

Your headteacher, senior staff and governors have done a good job in improving the school and have your best interests at heart. They give you every opportunity to play your part in the school community and have good ideas to make the school even better. This is important, as the recent improvements to children's progress in the Reception class have slowed and need to be back on track. I know that the teachers would value your ideas to improve the school.

I have every faith that you will continue to work hard, especially if all lessons are as exciting as some we saw. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Andrew Scott

Lead inspector

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