

# St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Washington Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 5AA

**Inspection dates** 5–6 November 2015

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Since the start of this academic year, school leaders, effectively supported and challenged by the interim executive board (IEB), have determinedly brought about rapid improvements, particularly in the quality of teaching.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. They track pupils' progress regularly and act swiftly when a pupil appears to be underachieving.
- Teaching and learning are now good and the school has made an effective start at assessing against the new National Curriculum in English and mathematics. Pupils say that lessons are 'fun'.
- The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and say that they feel safe. Their attendance has improved as a result of leaders' efforts.
- Pupils now make good progress in all year groups and reach above-average standards in reading and mathematics by Year 6. From September this year, improvements are evident this year in writing and early reading skills.
- Behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy learning and are attentive in lessons. They behave sensibly around the school and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Support for vulnerable pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is very well organised and effective.
- Children are given a good start in the early years, where teaching is effective and well planned. Children make good progress across all areas of learning and are well looked after.
- Recent support from the local authority and the diocese has been well focused.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all teachers apply the school's policy for marking consistently well.
- Pupils' progress is not yet being measured systematically in subjects other than reading, writing and mathematics.
- Several parents feel that they have not always been kept well enough informed about changes happening in the school or the actions leaders take to resolve their concerns.

## Full report

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
  - all teachers consistently apply the school's marking policy, to provide pupils with clear pointers about how to improve their work
  - pupils act on the advice given by correcting errors and responding to challenging questions posed by teachers.
- Keep parents more regularly informed about developments at the school, including leaders' actions.
- Develop manageable systems to assess and track pupils' progress in all subjects (as well as in reading, writing and mathematics).

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Despite the challenges of high staff turnover, recent improvements made to the leadership team mean leaders have a clear vision and effective plans for improvement. The executive headteacher's passion and ambition for the pupils at the school have inspired staff and created a positive culture of respect and determination to succeed. Morale is high and there is a strong team spirit among staff.
- The strengthened leadership team, including the new interim head of school, have worked relentlessly to improve the quality of teaching and have not shied away from taking difficult decisions. Monitoring of lessons and pupils' work is regular, systematic and mostly effective. Some recently introduced approaches have helped to improve consistency in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), writing and mathematics.
- Pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum, enhanced by a range of educational visits, such as the 'STEM challenge', visitors and lunchtime and after-school clubs. Music is a strength. Pupils have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, join an orchestra or be part of a choir. Key Stage 2 pupils sing tunefully and with gusto during assemblies.
- The way that the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, from the early years onwards, is effective. The promotion of SMSC is incorporated into all aspects of the school and is taught through religious education and personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils are learning about other faiths and cultures and show respect and tolerance towards diversity. They are taught about British values, for example through visits by representatives from the police, fire service and hospitals. Pupils take part in debates and learn about democracy through voting for house captains. Consequently pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school is tracking pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics very systematically and regularly, based on assessment against the new National Curriculum expectations. The assessment information is used well to identify pupils who are underachieving and to plan how to help them catch up. Pupils' attainment and progress in other subjects are not yet being assessed systematically, which makes it more difficult for staff to identify underachievement in these areas.
- The school's strong commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils has helped to ensure that no child falls behind. Staff know pupils well and care about their welfare as well as their academic achievements.
- Subject leaders make a positive contribution to improving teaching and learning in their areas. They are enthusiastic about the school and positive about the way that they have been supported and trained. They would welcome more opportunities to visit other schools in order to learn from others and share their good practice.
- The school, under the very effective leadership of the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), closely monitors the achievement of pupils who are vulnerable, disadvantaged, disabled or who have special educational needs or who speak English as additional language. The SENCo plans and carefully monitors the impact of programmes of additional support.
- The school has made good use of its additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, for example providing small-group and one-to-one teaching, and paying for resources and trips. The impact of the additional funds has been monitored rigorously.
- School leaders manage teachers' and teaching assistants' performance effectively. Staff feel valued and well supported by this process, which has resulted in improvements in teaching and learning. A well-planned programme of training has resulted in staff's enhanced knowledge of, for example, how to teach phonics and the new mathematics scheme.
- School leaders communicate well with parents in some respects, keeping them informed about upcoming events and their children's progress. There is good communication with Reception parents and with parents of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Several other parents said that they have not been kept well informed about developments at the school, such as the changes of teachers. Leaders accept that more could be done to keep parents abreast of such developments.
- The school makes good use of its primary physical education and sports funding. Staff confidence in teaching physical education has improved as a result of training paid for from the funds. More pupils are involved in a wide range of sports and competitions.
- The school has received timely and well regarded support from the local authority school partnership

adviser and from some subject advisers. Representatives from the Catholic diocese and archdiocese keep in regular contact with the school and have provided valuable support to leaders, including an induction programme for the executive headteacher.

#### ■ **The governance of the school**

- The governance of the school has played a significant role in moving the school forward since the last inspection. The IEB, very ably led by the chair, has drawn on the broad range of experience and expertise of its members to offer pertinent challenge and support to school leaders. Members have demonstrated a commitment and determination to help the school improve, based on their thorough and accurate knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses.
- The governance of the school is well aware of the quality of teaching and how school leaders are bringing about improvements. They have supported school leaders in making difficult decisions about staffing. An IEB data group has produced a concise but comprehensive report on the 2015 pupil outcomes.
- The governance of the school has every confidence in the executive headteacher and newly appointed interim head of school. The IEB holds school leaders appropriately to account by asking challenging questions and through presentations by subject coordinators. The IEB is monitoring effectively the impact of the additional funding.
- The IEB is making good arrangements for the transition to a permanent governing body. A shadow governing body is in place, and several of its members are also on the IEB. Shadow governors have been invited to attend IEB meetings and training.
- The IEB is aware of the concerns of some parents and has attempted to communicate with them to explain the monitoring visit outcomes. IEB members have attended parents' meetings. Members of the IEB accept that they need to do more to keep parents informed and have plans to improve communication through a parents forum, but it has not yet been established.

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All statutory requirements are met and school staff are vigilant about keeping pupils safe and secure.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** is good

- Teaching has improved and is now good.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and pupils say that they make learning fun. This was illustrated by the Second World War day in which staff and pupils dressed up in 1940s attire and role played the evacuation of children to the country. The discussions around the topic stimulated some high-quality writing by Year 5 and 6 pupils.
- Pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics are assessed carefully and regularly by teachers. Teachers plan activities effectively to build on pupils' prior learning and pupils are aware of their individual targets for improvement. The most-able pupils are often given challenging tasks that really make them think and apply their knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers' questioning is effective. Teachers encourage pupils to talk about their learning, to share ideas with others and to explain their reasoning, for example how they arrived at an answer in mathematics.
- All teachers check pupils' work regularly and provide written feedback. Some of the marking is of a high quality and in line with the school's policy. However, not all of the teachers' comments provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve. In addition, pupils do not always correct mistakes, or respond to teachers' questions or further challenges, which slows their progress.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive well targeted and skilful support by teaching assistants, which enables them to make good progress. Effective use is made of one-to-one and small-group teaching to accelerate the learning of pupils who need it, including disadvantaged pupils.
- The pupils who speak English as an additional language receive effective support in all years. Several children start in the Reception with little English but quickly catch up due to the close monitoring and extra help they receive.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are developing as confident and articulate learners. They enjoy being given responsibilities such as helping younger pupils and are being well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils are polite and respectful. They are developing caring and tolerant attitudes towards others and are quick to support their peers by, for example, explaining how to complete a task.
- The school looks after pupils' emotional health extremely well. All children are well known to staff, who quickly spot any signs of concern. A popular lunchtime club has been organised for vulnerable pupils. Pupils of all ages know about the importance of eating healthily and being active. They appreciate the wide range of sports offered by the school, such as taekwondo, rugby and cricket.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They have been taught about different types of bullying and they can describe how to keep themselves safe. They say that bullying is rare and dealt with quickly by staff.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' behaviour has improved since the last inspection. There has been a significant reduction in exclusions, with none this year. Most parents and staff believe that pupils behave well. Pupils say that everyone behaves well apart from a few who 'slip a bit'.
- School leaders have worked hard to improve attendance with much success as attendance this year is above average. The education welfare officer has worked closely with families where pupils have missed large amounts of schooling.
- There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere around the school and in lessons. Pupils know the school's 'golden rules' and enjoy receiving stickers for good behaviour. They demonstrate tolerance and understanding towards those few pupils who present challenging behaviour because of their particular special needs.
- Pupils are attentive in lessons and respond well to adults' instructions. Occasionally a few pupils lose focus and become distracted in lessons when the teaching fails to sustain their motivation.

## Outcomes for pupils are good

- Pupils' outcomes are now good and are improving. Pupils currently in the school are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from most starting points.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has improved each year and was above average in reading and well above in mathematics in 2015, with high proportions of pupils attaining standards beyond the expected level. The outcome in writing was not as good as in reading and mathematics, but current work in books and school records indicate that is improving this year. The most-able pupils in Years 1 and 2 are producing writing of a good standard.
- Results at the end of Key Stage 2 have also risen each year and have been consistently strong in spelling, grammar and punctuation, which was significantly above average in 2015. High proportions of pupils reached above-expected standards in reading, mathematics and in spelling, grammar and punctuation. Writing results were not as good, but current work shows some high-quality lengthy writing in literacy, topic and religious education books. Year 6 pupils are on track to get better results in writing this year.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive well-targeted support in lessons and in small groups. Most are making rapid progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are making as good or better progress than their peers. As a result of the school's robust monitoring and interventions, disadvantaged pupils make as good or better progress than others in the school and nationally.
- A below-average proportion of pupils passed the Year 1 phonics screening check in the past two years, although most passed when they took the check again in Year 2. This year the school's improved approach to the teaching of phonics, alongside training for staff and robust tracking by the phonics coordinator, has resulted in rapid improvements. A much higher than average proportion of pupils are on track to pass the screening check this year.
- The most-able pupils achieve well at St Anne's, as attested by the significant numbers that have reached high standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. For example, nearly a quarter of last year's Year 6 reached Level 6 (secondary school standard) in mathematics and most of the cohort reached Level 5 in reading.

- Pupils enjoy reading and they are encouraged to read from the early years. Pupils benefit from well-organised and effective guided reading sessions and opportunities to read with teaching assistants and volunteers. Many older pupils read confidently, fluently and with expression. They talk about books and authors and some use the public library as well as the school's own library. Reading records help to maintain a good link with parents.

## Early years provision

is good

- Children are given a good start to their schooling in the Reception class. They have settled in well and respond promptly to adults' instructions. They are well looked after and kept safe and secure.
- The early years are led and managed well. Adults plan activities carefully based on children's individual needs. They are tracking children's achievements well across all the areas of learning. The environment is well organised to provide a good range of interesting activities, inside and outside, that stimulate children's interest and hold their attention.
- Teaching is good in the early years. Staff work together well as a team. They provide good opportunities for pupils to develop numeracy and literacy skills, and their questioning encourages children to talk and to develop their understanding. Children are making great strides in developing their phonics knowledge through the well-targeted and imaginative teaching.
- Children engage well with the activities and are learning to take turns and share. Two girls were seen negotiating the use of a toy bicycle outside, with an amicable outcome for both. Children are making good progress across all areas of learning from their different starting points. The proportion that reached a good level of development has risen, although it was below average in 2015. Current Reception pupils are a more-able cohort and on track to do better this year. Children are well prepared for life in Year 1.
- The school makes good use of additional funding to ensure that disadvantaged children are making good progress. Effective help is also provided for those children who speak English as an additional language, several of whom are new to English.
- Early years staff engage well with parents and provide regular opportunities for parents to meet staff and discuss their children's progress. Parents are invited to attend 'together time' at the end of the day. They join their children and staff in singing fun songs, such as about fireworks. Parents spoken to were happy with their children's progress and felt well involved.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	110003
<b>Local authority</b>	Reading
<b>Inspection number</b>	10001591

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	183
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Interim executive board
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Kayes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Margot Buller (executive headteacher), Michelle Sheahan (interim head of school)
<b>Telephone number</b>	01189 015537
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-annes.reading.sch.uk">www.st-annes.reading.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@st-annes.reading.sch.uk">admin@st-annes.reading.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21–22 November 2013

## Information about this school

- St Anne’s is smaller than the average-sized primary school, with one class in each year group and a full-time Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium is average. Pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is higher than the national average. There is a much higher than average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, with small numbers of pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Around a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school runs a breakfast club each morning.
- There has been a change of headteacher and several teachers since the last inspection. The school is led by an executive headteacher, who has been in post for just over a year. She is also the headteacher of St Martin’s Catholic School in Caversham. The school is governed by an interim executive board.
- The school meets the government’s floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There was building work during the inspection that resulted in the school hall and library being out of use.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in each class, with most observations alongside the executive headteacher or head of school. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' current work in all subjects and year groups. They spoke with pupils in arranged meetings, during lessons and during lunch and breaktimes. They listened to pupils read and spoke with them about their reading habits.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject coordinators and a group of teaching assistants.
- Inspectors met with five members of the IEB and shadow governing body, a representative of Reading local authority and a representative from the Birmingham Catholic archdiocese.
- Inspectors talked to parents in the playground at the start of the day and in the Reception class at the end of the day.
- A range of school documents was studied, including information about pupils' progress and attainment, minutes of the IEB meetings, the school development plan, the self-evaluation report, safeguarding documents and records, attendance and behaviour records, policies, records of the monitoring of teaching and information relating to teachers' performance targets and training.
- Inspectors took account of the 36 responses of parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the 19 questionnaires returned by staff.

## Inspection team

Helena McVeigh, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kevin Parfoot

Ofsted Inspector

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