



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

INSPECTION REPORT

St Anne's Catholic Primary School
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D/E Number: 936 3469

Headteacher: Mr C Donovan
Chair of Governors: Mr B Peacock

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 2 November 2010
Date of previous inspection: 20 November 2007

Lead Inspector: Mrs M Hughes
Associate Inspector: Mrs A Ireland

Description of School

St Anne's is a large voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It is situated in the Epsom Deanery and is maintained by Surrey Local Authority. The school serves the parishes of St Ann's, Banstead and St John the Evangelist, Tadworth. There are currently 386 pupils on roll, 94% of whom are Catholic. The majority of pupils are White British but a small and growing proportion of them are from other ethnic minority groups. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and includes pupils with speech and language difficulties. 90% of the teachers are Catholic, 9 hold the Certificate in Catholic Education and 1 holds a Catholic leadership qualification. The school has been affected by some disruption to staffing but this has now been resolved.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

St Anne's is a good Catholic school which is moving towards excellence. Within a strong Catholic ethos, pupils are nurtured in their personal and academic development and encouraged to strive for distinction in all areas of school life. They, in response, learn to respect all members of the community as equally valuable, so relationships in the school are excellent. The strong sense of spirituality, enhanced by the school's prayer life and the highly supportive work of the parish priests, is matched by the dynamic partnership with parents and parish. With the strong systems of care and support, these promote outstanding spiritual, moral and social development in pupils. At the heart of the school's success are the strong leadership of the headteacher and his deputy and the culture of continuous improvement they have fostered among staff. This is a self-reflecting community, which is rapidly becoming more collegiate in nature. Governors provide outstanding support and conscientiously monitor the Catholic life of the school. They understand how well it performs, regularly holding leaders to account for their decisions. With the teachers they have high expectations of behaviour and standards, which are generally achieved. Pupils make good progress in religious education (RE) to reach above average levels of attainment, because a well planned, innovative curriculum matches their life experiences and consistently good teaching challenges their thinking. St Anne's is a cohesive community with a strong sense of family. Successful partnerships have been forged within the locality and with a school in South Africa, but there are too few opportunities available for pupils to gain experience of different cultures through links with schools outside the neighbourhood.

Grade 2

Improvement since the last inspection

Very good progress has been made in addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection. Assessment systems are now robust so pupil progress is tracked and any under achievement identified. Older pupils generate success criteria from specific learning outcomes in their lessons and use these in self assessment and peer assessment. Assessment for Learning techniques are used effectively and have had an impact on the progress of pupils, resulting in raised levels of attainment. Improvements in teaching and learning have included a strong focus on differentiation. Provision is carefully monitored to ensure it is effective and good

practice is shared among teachers to ensure activities are consistently challenging. The impact of such action is seen in the high standards achieved by all pupils, particularly the more able.

Many other improvements have been made, several due to the tremendous ability of the headteacher to infuse spirituality into every aspect of school life.

Grade 1

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

Rigorous arrangements for self evaluation, including thorough assessment systems, have ensured that the school has an accurate and honest view of its own performance. The school's track record of improving standards, especially in relation to issues identified in the last inspection, together with the strong commitment of the whole community to continuing development, demonstrates excellent capacity for yet further improvement.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue the development of the "learning journey" curriculum and monitor its impact on teaching and learning.
- Forge more links with schools or communities outside the locality so pupils gain experience of different life styles and cultures.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

Dedicated and forward looking school leaders and governors hold a shared vision for the school as a place where every pupil is recognised as uniquely created in the image of God. They seek to encourage a culture of continual progress in academic and personal development. The mission of the school "To grow in God's love and do our best in work, prayer and play" is lucid enough to be understood by everyone. One pupil said "It's what we do and it's what we follow". It is reflected in the excellent relationships and positive attitudes of all members of the community. The headteacher, strongly supported by a very innovative deputy headteacher, provides dynamic leadership to an increasingly cohesive staff team. Through actively seeking to develop middle leaders, they encourage all staff to make a full contribution to the management of the school. Self evaluation and reflective practice are seen as key elements in this process. Governors have a vast range of expertise and experience and all are thoroughly committed to the school. They are very well informed and pro-active in their recognition of priorities for development. By supporting and challenging school leaders they make a positive contribution to the school's continuing progress. Their committee structure ensures that the Catholicity of the school is central to all strategic decisions. The governor with responsibility for RE is very effective in monitoring prayer and standards. Parents are involved in every aspect of their children's education. The high level of parental participation results in a strong partnership between home and school. According to a recent parental survey, 100% of parents felt that St Anne's is a Catholic community. One summed it up with the comment "The school creates an environment of care, concern and spiritual growth. The Catholic dimension adds depth and a strong sense of underpinning values." Such close liaison with parents and the pro-active co-operation with external agencies to support pupils with specific needs, promote outstanding

pastoral care for pupils. The result is that all pupils, especially those with additional needs, are able to make a full contribution to school life and grow in their spiritual and moral development. The parish priests provide very good support to the school and the partnership with both parishes is strong. Parish Sacramental preparation is well supported by the school through such activities as the celebration Masses for pupils and their families. There is real energy in the lively home, school, parish alliance.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

Prayer and worship are natural to the rhythm of school life. All aspects of the school's work are celebrated through the many opportunities provided for prayer and reflection throughout the school day. A quiet space has been set aside for pupils, such as those in the Rosary Group, to use as they wish. A variety of prayer styles is encouraged, so pupils feel happy with spontaneous, formal and reflective prayer. The use of Prayer Partners allows older pupils to model good practice and encourages the younger pupils to express their thoughts among friends. The pupils obviously enjoy these partnerships and many expressed their appreciation of them. Every classroom has a focal point for prayer which is regularly monitored to ensure consistent quality and appropriate support for the R.E. programme. All lessons include a time for prayer and many good examples of pupils engaging in reflective prayer were observed. Even the youngest pupils responded well to silence as they sat quietly in a candle lit room for a short period of reflection. A good programme for collective worship, based on the liturgical year and supporting the RE programme, is planned to engage pupils at all levels of ability. It is well evaluated by the governors' Pastoral and Spiritual Committee. Inspectors visited a whole school assembly based on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day. It reflected the liturgical year and national events well with reference being made to the Pope's "Big Assembly". The content was relevant to all pupils as they were invited to think about friends and family who had died. Some read about past relatives from their class books of remembrance, which evoked a respectful, poignant silence. The pupils' response in prayer and song was excellent. It was encouraged by the teachers and teaching assistants, who were all seen singing and signing with enthusiasm. The liturgical life of the school is vibrant with visitors, governors and parents regularly rejoicing as a community. Mass is celebrated throughout the year with the Eucharist regarded as central to the life of the school. All teaching staff work diligently to prepare and deliver high quality liturgies and support pupils in their own preparation of acts of worship. As a result, by Year 6 pupils plan and lead collective worship with very little adult support. Liturgical formation is planned for progression so acts of worship are matched to the ages of the pupils. They are essentially multi-sensory to allow all pupils to deepen their faith through active participation. The school plays a full part in the life of the two parish communities. Pupils are a welcome presence in both churches and a choir is being formed to enable further co-operation with St Ann's. To cement the school/parish partnership, parishioners are invited to a fortnightly early morning Mass in the school hall. Both parish priests take an active role in shaping the liturgical life of the school and have a considerable impact on the spiritual and pastoral life of the community.

The result of such meaningful provision is clearly observed in the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral and cultural development. Spirituality is encouraged across the curriculum as pupils are invited to see God in the world around them. Their spiritual life is celebrated through the many artefacts and displays around the school.

Grade 1

How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?

Within the school there is a genuine sense of the unique importance of each individual pupil. All thrive in the understanding that they are one family and that diversity is valued. From the very beginning, new pupils are inducted into the school community and learn how they can contribute to its Catholic distinctiveness. The community cohesion policy details how the internal community is built on Gospel values and how that translates into contributing to the external community through charitable fundraising projects, such as CAFOD and Help for Heroes. Whilst the ethos of the school is strongly Catholic, the school ensures pupils develop their understanding of different faiths well. Through the RE programme pupils learn to respect the faith traditions of the wider community. Collective worship also promotes shared values and challenges prejudices. While liturgy is essentially Catholic, opportunities are provided for pupils to examine the major feasts of other religions. At all times, pupils are encouraged to respond personally through prayer and reflection so that they can develop their own relationship with God. Such good provision encourages the pupils' moral, social and cultural thinking. Well focussed behaviour management promotes behaviour which supports community cohesion. Pupils respect one another and reconciliation is seen as a living practice. The result is a happy school, where all pupils, including those with additional needs, feel they can make a difference. A thriving School Council facilitates the development of decision making and leadership skills as pupils enjoy taking responsibility for others. Older pupils act as role models to those who are younger and enjoy running friendship groups.

St Anne's is justly proud of the association it forges with the local community. The governor with responsibility for community cohesion oversees a comprehensive policy which includes association with the North Downs Confederation and with other deanery schools. Pupils take part in the local May Day celebrations and the school has made effective links with the local Anglican Church. While the neighbourhood partnership is strong, pupils have fewer opportunities to gain experience of, and respect for, pupils in different life situations. The link with the school in South Africa provides some such opportunities but pupils' understanding of different schools and communities in Britain is not so well fostered.

Grade 2

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Children enter school with understanding and skills that are generally above those expected for their age but have varying experience of Church. The school works exceptionally well with parents, forming a mutually supportive team to assist them in their child's faith development. Excellent induction procedures ensure a smooth transition into school so children settle quickly, making good progress in their social and emotional development. In the calm, friendly atmosphere of the Reception Class, pupils acquire elementary decision making and independent learning skills, so excellent foundations for faith development are laid. Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils flourish. Through effective teaching and regular opportunities to participate in collective worship, they are able to retell some of the main events in the life of Jesus. They are developing their religious vocabulary, recognising the signs and symbols of their religious beliefs. This was demonstrated by the Year 2 pupils, who knew the significance of the water, candle and white garment in Baptism and were able to discuss the duties of godparents. By the end of Key Stage 1 many reach above average levels of attainment in RE.

Progress continues throughout Key Stage 2 with pupils in all year groups reaching high standards, which indicates good progress in relation to their starting points. By Year 6 pupils know how their own decisions and those of others are informed by beliefs and values. This is exemplified by the way in which the Gospel directs their lives. They can engage and respond articulately to questions of life in the light of their own religious beliefs. For example, when asked "What do you gain by believing in Christ?" a Year 4 pupil responded "You have access to God's kingdom and Jesus' trust."

Good systems of tracking pupil progress allow any underachievement to be identified quickly so that intervention can be put in place and individual targets set. Consequently pupils with additional learning needs make good progress with excellent support from trained teaching assistants. With the move towards a more integrated curriculum, the more able pupils are also appropriately challenged to make good progress. When all the assessment systems are thoroughly embedded, attainment should rise even higher. Work in pupils' books shows a range of differentiated activities and some research work. Presentation is good.

Pupils respond positively to RE. They value the affirmation they receive from staff and are eager to do their best. They work extremely well in groups and independently so little time is wasted in class. Pupils ask searching questions about faith issues and respond confidently in discussion about their spiritual life. They are articulate and enthusiastic about all issues relating to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Teachers are keen and professional in their approach to RE, working hard to develop their own practice in order to support their pupils' learning. They have high expectations of themselves and of their pupils. Relationships are excellent. The teaching of RE is a key contributor in creating a classroom climate of acceptance and trust. It is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers plan lessons carefully, actively seeking to link the learning themes to the pupils' own life experiences to make it more meaningful. Assessment for Learning is well embedded and regularly informs planning so connections are made with past learning. Older pupils are kept engaged by such activities as "pitstop plenaries", which help them to check whether they are still working to the lesson's objectives. Year 6 pupils were observed regularly checking their learning against activity in order to achieve the success criteria. They did so with confidence and maturity. Pupils are able to generate "steps to success", ensuring progression within the lesson. They understand their own capabilities so often identify their own personal targets. As they move through the school pupils take increasing responsibility for their own learning. Effective developmental marking in their books also helps them to improve their work. The frequent use of "talk partners" keeps pupils on task and maintains a lively pace to learning. Interesting and engaging activities are carefully matched to the range of abilities in the class, with younger pupils frequently engaged in role play. Some well differentiated lessons were observed with different ability groups working to their own learning objectives. In one class the more able pupils used Scripture passages to identify why God wants us to be baptised and linked them to the text of the Easter Vigil. It was a demanding activity which they tackled with enthusiasm. Teaching assistants provide excellent, well focussed support for those with additional needs so that they too strive to become autonomous learners.

Assessment systems are well established and teachers use the data to group and plan appropriately. They ensure their judgements are secure by constantly sharing information with each other. They know their pupils well.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

In line with the Bishops' directive 10% of curriculum time is allocated specifically to RE, although it also permeates the whole school day through explicit and implicit means. It is taught through the ethos of the school and through the creative curriculum. Religious education, based on the "Here I Am" programme, recognises the importance of the parent partnership and encourages the spiritual, emotional and educational development of pupils. It aims to ensure that they acquire key skills which will support them as they become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. For example, pupils are encouraged to think ethically and theologically so that they ask questions and share answers. This lively curriculum promotes pupils' love of learning, challenging them to make connections between their knowledge and their own lives. Excellent planning secures progression in knowledge, understanding and skills, so that pupils of all abilities are able to reach appropriate levels of attainment. Creative cross curricular links with literacy, art and ICT successfully integrate RE into other areas of school life. A good example of such integration was apparent in The Passion Play which used literacy, art and music to reinforce religious knowledge. At the moment the RE curriculum is being re-designed to match the "learning journey" approach used in the wider curriculum. This will allow for even more creativity and innovation as different subjects are integrated. The fullest possible use is made of resources, including visitors to the school. Working with the parishes and other schools also enriches provision. This, supplemented by a wealth of extra-curricular activities and trips, contributes to the quality of pupils' learning experiences. Clubs, such as Team Building and Multi Skills, encourage pupils to work and play effectively together.

A well organised programme for PHSE (personal, health and social education) and SRE (sex and relationship education) is assimilated into the curriculum and makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils. It encourages self respect by developing their confidence in talking, listening and thinking about feelings and relationships.

Grade 1

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The leadership and management of RE is strongly focussed on the school's Catholic mission, on raising standards and on promoting the faith development of pupils. School leaders recognise RE as being central to the school's Catholic ethos and its sense of family. They share a clear vision for the development of the subject. The subject leader plays a strategic role in the continuing development of RE through her thorough knowledge of teaching and learning and through appropriate action planning. She monitors provision rigorously, measuring the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. Teachers are encouraged to become reflective in their practice through developmental feedback so that strengths are consolidated and good practice is shared. Evidence shows that the quality of lessons has improved as a result of colleagues working so closely together. Teaching and learning are supported by good professional development, which is structured to make a direct impact on classroom practice. All staff, including those who are not Catholic, are well supported in their work. The subject leader communicates diocesan and national expectations effectively and ensures that all are kept up to date with new initiatives. She manages resources, including visitors, so they are used creatively to enhance learning. The governor with responsibility for RE works closely with the subject leader, headteacher and deputy headteacher to ensure she has a very clear picture of the standards expected and achieved. She offers her own expertise, and in her role as critical friend, makes a positive impact on the Catholic life of the school. The impact of such good leadership and management of RE is seen in the way that all pupils, irrespective of ability, gender or race make good progress in their learning and in their personal development. It is also seen in the shared sense of mission obvious throughout the school.

Grade 2