

St Ann's School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101971
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	355103
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2011
Reporting inspector	James Bowden

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	27
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Balbinder Grewal
Headteacher	Gillian Carver
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited twelve lessons, seeing twelve teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders and others with posts of responsibility. In addition, a meeting was held with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other members. The inspectors also met with two small groups of students. They observed the school's work and looked at samples of students' work, assessment and progress files and the school's planning and other assessment records. The lead inspector analysed questionnaires from 55 parents and carers, 52 pupils and 48 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Does the school have a consistent track record of improving students' achievement at the end of Key Stage 4 and the end of the sixth form?
- Is teaching and learning support sufficiently challenging for students, enabling all groups to make the best progress possible?
- How well are new technologies used to support teaching, enliven learning and in preparing students for the future?
- How effective is leadership at all levels, including governance, in moving the school onwards and upwards?

Information about the school

St Ann's provides for students with severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties or a combination of severe learning difficulties and autistic spectrum disorders. Over half are non-verbal and many have specific medical needs. All have a statement of special educational needs. Currently, most students are of minority ethnic heritage and a large majority are at early stages in learning English as an additional language. The largest groups are from Black or Black African and Asian or Asian British Indian backgrounds. The percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average.

The school has achieved Sportsmark status. It has been recognised as a Makaton Centre of Excellence and has the Full International School Award.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school is satisfactory. It provides a satisfactory education for its students and meets its core aim of enabling all young people to achieve their individual potential and independence. St Ann's is a school where all are students are valued and treated with dignity and respect. The quality of care, guidance and support for students, including safeguarding arrangements, is good. This supports well the good improvements in their personal development and prepares students well for the next stage of their lives after sixth form. Students say they feel safe at school, enjoy their learning and learn a lot in lessons. They told the inspectors that they particularly like physical education and how well adults help them in lessons. Every day, not only do they arrive with smiling faces, but also end the day that way. Although some are clearly physically tired, their attitudes are still positive as they board the fleet of mini-buses to take them home.

The school has good collaborative working with an extensive range of other professionals to extend curriculum opportunities and to support students' medical and personal needs. In addition, it works hard and successfully to engage parents and carers, involving them in the admissions process and keeping them informed about their child's progress. Consequently, the overwhelming majority are appreciative of the school's work. One wrote, 'I have seen changes in my son's behaviour, all working towards him being more independent. St Ann's keeps me informed of all aspects of his learning.'

While the levels of attainment reached by the time they leave school at the end of sixth form are exceptionally low because of their special educational needs, students' academic progress across the school is satisfactory and improving over time. This is shown by the school's effective use of the National Progression Guidance for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities to determine how well they achieve in relation to their starting points. There are no significant differences between different groups of students. However, in lessons there is an inconsistency in how well adults monitor and evaluate students' progress. Inconsistent practice is particularly evident in measuring the students' small steps of improvement in communication, organisational skills and developing independence in, for instance, making choices and responding to visual, tactile and auditory stimuli.

Teaching is satisfactory and improving as a result of the school's focus on increasing the rates of progress students make. Learning support assistants and other adults who work in lessons contribute well to this. The use of signing is widespread by adults and helps students' communications skills improve effectively, this being recognised by the Makaton Centre of Excellence. Teachers are competent in the use of new technologies to support learning effectively. However, there are insufficient opportunities for students to use these technologies themselves, using the interactive whiteboards, for instance, to enliven their learning and to help them find things out and make things happen. Changes have been

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made to ensure the curriculum meets the needs of students more effectively. For example, specialist classes for students with autistic spectrum disorders have been introduced and a sharper focus has been placed on developing older students' independence. Although changes have been made, the school recognises that there are still issues over matching the curriculum more closely to the needs of students with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties.

The headteacher, senior leaders and managers have a clear sense of direction and purpose for the school, with a focus on continuing improvement, particularly in teaching, learning and progress. The staff support the school's ethos and have the best interests of students at heart. Curriculum content and enrichment activities support the school's good promotion of community cohesion within the school itself, the local community and beyond, including the international community.

Although the school recognises that there is still room for improvement in more focused assessment of individual students' progress, the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection have been remedied. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and underpins the school's strategic planning. The governing body supports the work of the school and is developing well its effectiveness in this respect. However, the impact of curricular changes introduced and the gradual restructuring of the leadership team have yet to be felt significantly. In light of these limitations, the school's current capacity for sustained improvement is not above satisfactory.

Up to 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the end of this current school year, sharpen the quality and consistency of the monitoring and recording of progress made by students in lessons, including the small steps in progress made by students with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- Plan the curriculum to more closely to the needs of students with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- Ensure all students have access to and use new technologies to make their learning more interesting and varied.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In lessons all students consolidate and build on previous learning well and make satisfactory progress in new learning. Students benefit from working in small groups, where they receive appropriately focused individual attention from the adults in the room. In a physical education lesson, pupils made good progress in relation to their physical capabilities. The more agile worked as pairs to develop their dance moves to the music of JLS whilst those with more complex physical needs made similarly good progress as a result of individually planned and delivered activities. However, in other lessons, the pace and challenge is less effective and progress is slower because the work is not planned sufficiently well to match the learning needs of students. In an English lesson, one student with severe learning difficulties finished the task too quickly and had insufficient extension work provided, whilst other students struggled to complete the work.

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Although there are occasional outbursts, mainly owing to frustrations rather than untoward intentions, learning was not interrupted by any disruptive behaviour during the inspection. The atmosphere in the dining areas at lunchtimes and break times outdoors is calm and sociable, being underpinned by good relationships between staff and students. Visual recognition of adults by those with the most complex of needs is often evident and helps students remain calm. Students eat healthily because the food provided meets their dietary needs, as well as giving them choice at lunchtimes. Attendance is average, although individual medical needs, including long-term illness, affect the statistics. Unauthorised absence is low. Even though students' basic academic skills are generally very low, their overall economic well-being is good because all stay on to the sixth form at St Ann's and afterwards all move on to further education, training or supported living arrangements. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and contributes well to their awareness of being part of a community. Displays around the school are indicative of students' effective and lively creative endeavours.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	*
Pupils' attainment ¹	
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and other adults work effectively together and know the needs of students well. Sensitive and careful interventions ensure students stay on task. In a lesson for younger

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students with autistic spectrum disorders, clear targets were set and a good range of resources, including a walking penguin, were used to encourage communication and enable students to express a range of feelings. In an art lesson, all students were provided with a range of visual and tactile resources to support their creation of still life drawings and paintings of fruit. Learning intentions are made clear and in some lessons, students are encouraged to indicate how well they think they have done by pointing to 'traffic-light' assessment cards. Praise is used wisely by all adults in the room to encourage perseverance and successful outcomes.

Since the previous inspection the school has implemented a full secondary curriculum taught by subject specialists, apart from the classes for students with autistic spectrum disorders. This contributes effectively to students' academic progress and personal development, including aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Learning is supported by a broad range of enrichment activities, including therapies, both within the school day and beyond. The school's provision for physical activity has been recognised by the Sportsmark award. Pupils told the inspectors they would like even more sport on the timetable.

Students' health and well-being are at the forefront of the school's ethos of care and sensitivity to students' needs. Adults work hard to ensure this, helping each individual, including the most vulnerable, in very specific ways. This results in all being looked after in a safe, healthy and caring environment. A carefully managed and executed programme of reviews is effective in supporting students when they first join the school, throughout their time there and when they leave. Parents and carers too are given careful support when needed. Procedures for raising attendance rates are effective and those who are absent because of their medical needs are provided with appropriate work until their return.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The drive and ambition of school leaders have resulted in a sharper focus than previously on monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning, which is bringing improvements. Leaders and managers have accurately identified areas for further improvement. The school has worked conscientiously to develop effective partnerships with parents and carers, and with many other agencies. It is effective in ensuring all learners have equality of opportunity. It tackles any discrimination and achieves an effective ethos of inclusion, with no underachievement of any individual or group. The new Chair of the Governing Body and other members work closely with the school to ensure safeguarding procedures and practices are effective, up to date and reflect current good practice. The school's work

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in promoting community cohesion locally is good and its efforts beyond the school have been recognised by the Full International School Award. Given the outcomes the school achieves, it is using its resources effectively and providing satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
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	3

Sixth form

Since the previous inspection a new head of sixth form has been appointed. The curriculum is now being developed with a greater focus on students' independence and 'moving on'. This has resulted in more effective provision overall, including the introduction of accredited courses and work-related learning opportunities through links with other providers. Consequently, students are developing well their independence and personal attributes, which helps prepare them for life beyond the school. Students enjoy the sixth form, one telling the inspectors, 'School is good, I come every day.' Students' behaviour and attitudes are good and they appreciate the opportunities to socialise at breakfast and lunchtimes, including using their own common room with new technology resources.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as is the progress students make. In a lesson focusing on ways to say 'yes' and 'no', students with profound and multiple learning difficulties made excellent progress as a result of individually planned activities matched to their particular needs. These ranged from the use of an electronic keyboard to a wide range of other visual and tactile stimuli. In addition, adults recorded closely the small steps in progress being made by students. By contrast, in another lesson where students were looking at products imported into the country, the work provided was the same for all. All were expected to complete a cut-and-paste activity, which for some was far too demanding, yet for one student too easy and therefore unchallenging.

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Levels of care, support and guidance are similar to the good provision in the rest of the school.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned was almost double the national average for special schools. Almost all parents and carers are happy with their child's experience at the school and say their child enjoys school. In addition, all state the school keeps their child safe. This inspection confirms these views. A very small minority felt that their child was not making enough progress and that the school was not helping their child to have a healthy lifestyle, but inspectors found no evidence of this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Ann's 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 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 83 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	71	15	27	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	36	65	18	33	0	0	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	67	16	29	1	2	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	49	23	42	4	7	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	32	58	20	36	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	58	18	33	3	5	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	53	21	38	4	7	1	2
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)	31	56	16	29	2	4	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	55	21	38	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	53	20	36	2	4	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	53	21	38	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	36	65	14	25	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	64	17	31	1	2	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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



25 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of St Ann's School, London W7 3JP

Not so long ago, two of us came to your school to see how well you are getting on. We also wanted to know whether we could suggest anything to make things even better for you. We really enjoyed meeting you in lessons, around the school and with the two small groups we met more formally. You told us how much you like school. We also enjoyed our time at the school!

We think your school is satisfactory. Here are some of the good things we found:

- The school works really well with lots of other people, including your parents and carers, to help you.
- The staff care for you well and make sure you are safe.
- In lessons, teachers and other adults give you lots of help and support.
- There are lots of interesting things for you to do.
- The headteacher has plans to make things even better for you.

We think the school could be better and have asked the headteacher to:

- Make sure staff assess what you do more carefully.
- Make sure the curriculum helps you even more.
- Make sure you use new technologies more in lessons.

You too can all help by continuing to enjoy the school. Many thanks for letting us see what you were learning in school during our visit.

Yours sincerely

James Bowden

Lead inspector

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