

St Anselm's Catholic School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118918
Local Authority	Canterbury
Inspection number	379708
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Meena Wood HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1048
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	158
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Dr Gehad Homsey
Headteacher	Mr Mike Walters
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 February 2009
School address	Old Dover Road Canterbury CT1 3EN
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 36 lessons, observed 33 teachers, and held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, parent governors, leaders and managers, teaching staff, students and parents and carers. They carried out a number of joint observations of lessons with the school's senior managers. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school development plan and departmental reviews, a range of school policies, local authority reviews, records of internal observations of teaching and learning, students' work, including their assessed work in English, science and mathematics, and questionnaires completed by students, staff and 138 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas across Key Stages 4 and 5.

- Whether the curriculum, teaching and assessment are sufficiently tailored to the needs of different ability groups, in particular, more able students and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Whether the quality of the teaching and students' behaviour in lessons enable students to make more than the expected progress in their learning.
- The consistency of outcomes for students across core subjects and key stages.
- The capacity of senior leaders and governors to accelerate students' progress and achievement and to improve parental engagement.

Information about the school

St Anselm's Catholic School is a large secondary school, with specialist status in science. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities and/or a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. Most of these students have moderate learning difficulties, or behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. The vast majority of students are from White British backgrounds. The main minority ethnic group is Eastern European. The proportion of students at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language is very low. Few students are known to be eligible for free school meals.

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****2**

Main findings

St Anselm's Catholic School is a satisfactory school with a cohesive community and a strong ethos of good student behaviour. One parent echoed the views of many: 'It is an effective, successful and happy school that has improved steadily since Mr Walters became head.'

In the past year, steered by the highly respected new headteacher, the school has secured significant improvements, particularly in relation to students' well-being and behaviour and communication with their parents and carers. In addition, the school has prioritised building the leadership capacity of middle managers and enhancing the quality of the school's self-evaluation. These initiatives, together with a more rigorous focus on students' achievement, have led to improved GCSE results and indicate that the school now has a good capacity to improve.

The GCSE examination results, including mathematics and English, have improved steadily over the last two years from well below national averages. Students in 2011 made broadly satisfactory progress and attained results which have not yet been validated but are in line with national averages. Recent changes in the Key Stage 4 curriculum allow students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are more able, to follow more appropriate courses. This has resulted in better progress and improved the reading ages of those with moderate learning difficulties. Despite some highly positive changes, the school is aware that there are gaps in the sixth form curriculum, and has prioritised meeting students' needs more fully in Key Stage 4, especially in science.

The school works very productively in a range of partnerships which include partner schools. This has especially benefited students in the sixth form through a greater choice of subjects and city-wide communication between institutions, that keeps students well informed of their achievement in the school or in the other institutions they may attend. In Key Stage 4, a joint collaboration with the local college resulted in successful outcomes for those studying for the Diploma in Creative and Media Studies.

Transition for Year 7 students to the school is facilitated through the strong links that the school has with its Catholic primary schools. In Years 9 and 11, students receive good advice and guidance to help them choose their future programmes. Personalised care and support for all students, especially vulnerable students, have resulted in the vast majority feeling valued within a safe and inclusive community.

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One student reported, 'It's okay to be different in this school!' The recent introduction of the house and tutoring system, with its focus on older students working with younger ones, has been especially popular with students, staff, parents and carers and has resulted in significantly improved attitudes to learning. Students are courteous and respectful towards each other, and towards adults.

The school is effectively addressing key priorities arising from the last inspection, with the result that senior and subject leaders have a far better understanding of the features of good teaching and assessment. As yet, though, this understanding is not fully evident in all subjects. In many lessons, teachers are not using the information they have on their students' levels to plan lesson activities and tasks in line with their needs. This is especially the case in science and French. Good practice in assessment in a few subjects is emerging, with students given sound feedback on how to improve. However, inspectors observed inconsistency in teachers' detailed checking of students' learning and the marking of their work across most subjects. In addition, the review of students' target grades is insufficiently responsive, so that in some cases, teachers and teaching assistants are unsure how to improve their students' progress beyond the expected levels, in particular, for those of higher ability.

Leaders and managers are aware that the monitoring and evaluation of new systems are not yet rigorous enough. Nevertheless, the improved tracking of students' progress in the last year, coupled with effective subject support, has resulted in raised achievement, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Up to 40% of the 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?

- Accelerate students' progress and raise attainment across all subjects, especially in English, mathematics and science, by August 2012, by:
 - effectively checking and extending all students' learning during lessons, and giving them consistently detailed oral and written feedback
 - planning learning activities that challenge all students, especially those of higher ability
 - continuing to ensure that the curriculum responds to the levels, needs and abilities of all students, especially in the sixth form.
- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment by monitoring carefully each student's academic and pastoral progress to ensure that target grades are sufficiently challenging and in line with the student's abilities.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The sharper focus that school leaders have on the attainment of students with statements of special educational needs and those identified as school action plus is showing signs of reducing the gap in attainment, when compared with other groups in the school. Students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, including those with moderate learning difficulties and those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, owing to the quality of the interventions, make at least satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress. The small numbers of students at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language make good progress. However, more-able students are not making the progress of which they are capable.

In a minority of lessons, students visibly enjoyed learning, were well motivated, were responsive to well-structured tasks and took responsibility for their learning. When given the opportunities in some subjects, for instance in film studies, information and communication technology and history, they worked successfully as independent learners and made at least good, and sometimes outstanding, progress. However, in most lessons, students who are keen and willing learners are not challenged sufficiently through the tasks and activities set, and many make only expected levels of progress.

Extra-curricular opportunities contribute well to broadening students' social and entrepreneurial skills and to developing a strong sense of community. Students are heavily involved in charity and fund-raising initiatives. Mentors and buddies successfully support their peers across the school. Many students develop their leadership skills through the school council; some have successfully contributed to the anti-bullying pledge, as well as various healthy school initiatives, with some invited to participate in the appointment of new staff. Good opportunities exist for sixth-form students to lead in tutor group discussions. One excellent session observed by inspectors, broadened younger students' horizons by challenging their thinking on the controversial issues of child slavery and race.

Students participate well in a range of sports activities and they have a good awareness of the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle. Their literacy, computing and numeracy skills are satisfactory. The school is working hard to improve students' attendance which is now in line with the national average. Punctuality is good as the majority of students are well motivated, value relationships with their teachers and enjoy their lessons. Structured learning opportunities in lessons, for instance active citizenship lessons, tutor groups and assemblies, contribute to students' strong sense of values and they are prepared to consider others' points of view and reassess their own beliefs.

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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	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In a minority of lessons, learning activities and pace are planned carefully to take into account students' levels and abilities. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and good classroom management skills and use these to inspire learning effectively. Nevertheless, in too many lessons, the pace of learning is too slow and the setting of learning objectives and tasks does not take the full range of students' prior attainment into account. In some lessons, teachers do not check sufficiently the knowledge and skills students are acquiring before moving on to the next activity and questioning techniques do not always check and extend students' skills and knowledge. Teaching assistants are not always deployed well to support students with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school has implemented a competency-based curriculum in Year 7 and this is helping to ensure that there is a greater cross-curricular focus on students' skills and knowledge. In Years 10 and 11, students follow appropriate and flexible pathways in academic and vocational subjects. This year, students with special educational needs and/or disabilities follow a level 1 pathway. In addition to examinations in the core subjects, this helps them to achieve certification in work and life skills. The school's specialist status in science has not had a significant impact on GCSE results but has successfully fostered links with local primary schools.

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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Effective school–home liaison and contact with a range of services ensure timely and well-targeted support for students facing challenging circumstances and have resulted in raising the attendance of some groups of students. However, the school has been less successful with a very small minority of students known to be eligible for free school meals, who continue to have significant periods of absence. The school works very well with students who are long-term absent through illness, by supporting their welfare and achievement in the local hospital school. The care of students with statements of special educational needs and those who are identified as needing additional learning support is highly valued by parents, carers and their children. Good advice and guidance at 16 ensures that the vast majority of those students who leave school continue either into further education, training or employment.

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 headteacher has worked purposefully on raising staff and student morale and has successfully led his managers in implementing a significant change in ethos and student behaviour. These developments are now beginning to transform the learning culture of the school. Delegated leadership and management and greater staff accountability are now firmly emerging. A more rigorous emphasis is placed on the analysis of performance data by managers to ensure support for underachieving students. Self-evaluation at whole-school level is self-critical and departmental plans reflect the need to raise attainment. Nevertheless, the plans do not analyse sufficiently the learning and progress of individual students and groups of students as seen through internal lesson observations, work sampling or discussions with students. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by senior leaders observed by inspectors was rigorous. This has clearly contributed to raising the expectations of staff and a good start has been made in raising attainment in some subjects.

The support and challenge provided by the governing body are satisfactory. As a result of recent appointments, including parent governors, the majority of governors now have a good breadth of experience and skills. The governing body is committed to raising achievement in the school but not all governors are equally knowledgeable of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Safeguarding procedures are no more than satisfactory, because in a very few instances safeguarding reviews are not

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sufficiently thorough. Nevertheless, arrangements for inter-agency working are very effective and the school fosters a realistic understanding of risk and helps students to keep themselves safe. Moreover, the school regularly takes into account the views of parents, carers and students and provides an e-safety course for them. The equalities plans are beginning to reveal the school's success in tackling the poor attendance and underachievement of specific groups. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Students demonstrate a good understanding and awareness of their local ethnic, socio-economic and religious context but their awareness of these issues within the context of national and global communities is less well developed.

Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school. They are kept well informed through the school newsletters and receive regular reports on their children's progress during the year. They are further supported through the parent support adviser on inter-school transfers and issues of behaviour. Parents and carers are invited into school to share their expertise and experiences, and students talk positively of these.

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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Outcomes for sixth form students in 2011 indicate that the majority of students make broadly satisfactory progress relative to their low starting points. Their attainment in AS examinations has been below the national averages for the last three years, but A-level results have risen to the national average in the last two years. The majority of students enjoy their lessons and many develop sound subject knowledge and skills.

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Assessment strategies are not sufficiently well developed in a number of lessons and this means that students are not always extended in their learning or helped to develop more sophisticated critical and analytical thinking skills. The sixth form curriculum is still developing so that it fully meets the needs of all its students and the vast majority make a successful transition from Year 11 to Year 13 and achieve sound outcomes. Pastoral support is strong in the sixth form and students report that they are well supported by their tutors who review their personal learning targets and progress with them. Virtually all students leave the sixth form for university, work or further education.

The school has highly productive links with the local universities and students receive good support with university applications through the 'Stepping Up' programme. They also regularly attend external university events, thus developing their aspirations and subject knowledge.

The sixth form director is a recent appointment and with good support from senior leaders is addressing effectively the priorities of raising achievement and improving the staying-on rates of students.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	3
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

Of the school's parents and carers who responded, the overwhelming majority are happy with the education and care received by their children and with the leadership of the new headteacher. A few voiced concerns that their child was not getting sufficiently good advice and guidance on future options and that the school was not helping their child to have a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors did not find sufficient evidence to support these concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Anselm's Catholic 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 inspector received 138 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1048 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	79	60	50	38	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	62	47	69	52	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	58	44	66	50	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	55	42	67	51	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	54	41	67	51	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	32	70	53	9	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	24	85	64	10	8	0	0
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)	46	35	72	55	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	39	71	54	6	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	42	60	45	10	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	36	60	45	7	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	66	50	63	48	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	73	55	53	40	1	1	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



20 October 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of St Anselm's Catholic School, Canterbury, CT1 3EN

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed being in your lessons and were impressed by how polite and courteous you were and by your good attitudes towards your learning. We judged that your school, including the sixth form, is satisfactory.

Most of you enjoy your lessons, make satisfactory progress and attain broadly average results at GCSE. In some lessons, we observed well-planned tasks and activities, but many lessons were not helping you do as well as you could. In some cases, we found that your target grade was not sufficiently challenging for you. However, the school provides you with good subject support outside lessons.

Many of you told us how proud you felt about the new house system, your tutor groups, the new ties and how valued you now feel in school. There is a range of courses for you to choose from and the school is reviewing these to make them as relevant as possible. The good advice and guidance you receive in Years 9, 11 and 13 prepare you very well for the next stages in your learning. Most of you attend school punctually and regularly.

To help the school improve further, we have asked teachers and managers to:

- improve your GCSE results by checking your learning in lessons, ensuring that you get more detailed feedback, and always setting you appropriate and challenging activities and tasks
- ensure that the courses you follow are tailored to your needs.

All of you can help by making sure you attend your lessons and fulfil your potential.

We wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Meena Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector

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