

St Anne's Catholic School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	116509
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	379271
Inspection dates	1–2 February 2012
Lead inspector	Alan Taylor-Bennett 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	Girls
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,091
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Fearon
Headteacher	Beverley Murtagh
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2007
School address	Carlton Road Southampton SO15 2WZ
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Introduction

Inspection team

Alan Taylor-Bennett	Her Majesty's Inspector
Victor Chaffey	Additional inspector
Margaret Faull	Additional inspector
Mary Hoather	Additional inspector
Stephanie Matthews	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 54 lessons, some jointly with senior staff, seeing the work of 55 teachers. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, had two telephone conversations with parents, observed the school's work, and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body. A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's development plans, its self-review, analyses of the attainment and progress of its pupils, records of lesson observations and policies. Inspectors took account of the responses on the 351 questionnaires received from parents and carers, and those from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

St Anne's Catholic School is a larger-than-average school and operates under the trusteeship of La Sainte Union Sisters. It admits girls into Years 7 to 13 and boys into its sixth form. It is situated in the centre of Southampton City and draws students from a large area and from over 50 primary schools. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is near the national average. Most students are White British, but the proportion from minority ethnic groups is larger than average having increased over recent years. The proportion of students speaking English as an additional language is above average and there is a small but growing number who are at an early stage of learning English. The school has a specialism in science and mathematics and has Leading Edge status, with literacy as a focus. It works in close partnership with another local secondary school and six Catholic primary schools in the south of Hampshire. The school meets the current floor standard.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key findings

- St Anne's Catholic School is providing a good quality of education for its students. The quality of some aspects of its work is outstanding.
- The headteacher leads the school with great clarity of purpose and communicates very high expectations. At the same time as pursuing high quality academic outcomes for all students, she maintains a constant emphasis on attending to their individual and personal needs. This has resulted in the school being a very positive, vibrant and resilient learning community.
- The strength of its ethos has enabled the school to cope very successfully with significant changes in the nature and the particular needs of students over the last few years.
- Good teaching supports good levels of achievement by students. Students leave Year 11 with GCSE results that are significantly better than the national averages, and they make good progress over Key Stages 3 and 4.
- The sixth form is good. The progress made by sixth form students has been less strong over recent years, but never less than satisfactory. It is now good, and improving, because of strong and effective leadership in that area, and good quality provision.
- Most of the teaching is good and some is outstanding. The school gives very high priority to constantly improving the quality of teaching and does so successfully. It is aware of the ways in which the teaching needs to improve to secure outstanding progress for all students.
- Students' behaviour is exemplary. They show very high regard for the values of the school and individuals show great pride in being part of such a close-knit and successful community. Outstanding behaviour supports their learning strongly.
- The provision for social, moral, cultural and spiritual development in the curriculum is very well developed and it has an extremely positive impact on students' experiences.
- Parents and carers show high levels of confidence in the work of the school. The school values their contributions to its work but there remains untapped potential for closer collaborative work that could lead to even higher quality

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outcomes for students.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that, by summer 2013, at least 40% is outstanding and the remainder is at least consistently good in all departments, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use assessment methods, including high quality questioning, throughout lessons to provide them with feedback about students' understanding, and so respond appropriately
 - ensuring that work in lessons and homework are matched closely to the specific needs of individuals and groups of students
 - bringing the quality of feedback to students in all departments up the standard of the best in the school so that students receive consistently high quality information about how they can improve
 - capitalising on the very positive working relationships evident in the school, to develop strategies that involve students and their parents and carers exercising stronger influence over levels of achievement.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Students make good progress in many lessons, and in some the quality of their learning is outstanding. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above average. Students want to learn and they respond very well to teachers allowing them to puzzle things out for themselves, within a framework of support and high levels of challenge. For example, in one excellent Year 12 biology lesson, the well-structured group work on an appropriately open-ended task, managed skilfully by the teacher through probing questioning, enabled students to identify for themselves how their learning and experiences in previous practical work contributed to their understanding of the next stages.

The achievement of all groups of students is good. Disabled students and those with special educational needs achieve well, although their learning in the special needs department is usually better than in classrooms because of a lack of adaptation of the teaching, or the resources, to meet their specific needs sometimes. Students speaking English as an additional language, including the small but growing number at an early stage of learning English, make very good progress because of the high quality support they receive, which is tailored to their individual needs. The progress made by students in the sixth form is now securely good; this represents an important improvement from the satisfactory achievement seen over recent years and is a direct result of better mechanisms to support learning at this level.

This picture of good progress is in agreement with the very high level of satisfaction about progress expressed by parents and carers.

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Quality of teaching

Inspection evidence confirmed the views of parents and carers about the good quality of teaching, as well as the school's judgements that none is inadequate and about three quarters of teaching is good or better with about one fifth being outstanding. The continual and skilful use of a range of small-scale assessment techniques in outstanding lessons gives those teachers the capacity to steer learning strongly. In such lessons, questioning is frequent and is used to shape learning rather than simply obtain right answers. In a Year 7 lesson in English on *Goodnight Mister Tom*, the teacher gave students opportunities to gain insight into the text in ordered and systematic ways, supported by probing but not intrusive questioning. This generated excellent progress. In this way, the best teaching strongly supports the development of key social skills as well as students' excitement about learning of the wider world beyond their immediate experience, including other cultures and beliefs, and extracts maximum benefit from the planned curriculum. Satisfactory teaching in the school is characterised by clarity of planning and explanation which supports adequate progress, but a lack of high quality whole-class interaction and 'pacy' group discussion. This does not capitalise on the students' often excellent behaviour and their capacity to steer their own learning. In some lessons, the needs of significant groups of students are adequately met by the teacher offering some individual intervention, but this does not lead to the provision of different and more appropriate work or alternative materials.

Some marking is of a very high standard. For example, in some mathematics books, there is evidence of debate between teachers and students about improvement strategies and clear examples of students responding to the advice offered, to good effect. Other marking is limited to checking that work has been completed and it misses opportunities to help students to identify ways forward for themselves.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Students typically demonstrate a very high level of mutual respect and a sense of value for the extremely positive ethos in the school. They move between lessons calmly and happily, and arrive to lessons promptly despite some inevitable crowding in the narrow corridors and stairwells. In lessons, they show considerable interest in their work and a genuine willingness to take part and play an active role. Even when the teaching occasionally offers insufficient challenge or variation, they respond constructively and help to maintain the momentum of the learning. The degree of cooperation across year groups is high, and includes well-developed 'bullybusters' and mentoring systems. One Year 8 girl said that the school '... feels like a big family – we all mix together'. Bullying and racial incidents are very rare. Some relationship problems are described by students as the occasional but unfortunate consequences of some friendships coming to an end. They show total confidence that any such problems would be reported to staff, and feel that the response is measured and very effective. A Year 13 girl reflected that 'for all seven years I have felt supported and encouraged' and one parent made a point of contacting the inspection team to

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explain how delighted she was that her daughter had settled so happily into this school, having experienced problems in her previous school.

The level of understanding demonstrated about all forms of risk, including maintaining e-safety, is impressive. Students show the capacity to use their judgement wisely and sensibly, and look after each other in such situations. Their sense of pride in their school is palpable; they appreciate that they are members of a very harmonious and caring community and respond by doing everything they can to sustain it. This very positive view of behaviour is strongly supported by the very large majority of parents and carers in the school's annual surveys, and is in accord with responses to the inspection surveys.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and her senior team have steered the school through a period of change and development over recent years with great skill. They focus consistently on securing the highest levels of achievement and quality of well-being for all students. The school has deliberately evolved the ways in which it translates high levels of care and support into outcomes for students to bring it, in the words of one member of staff, 'confidently into the 21st century'. Because of this outstanding leadership, achievement, the quality of teaching and the behaviour of students have all either been maintained as outstanding or are at least good and improving strongly.

The vision of the headteacher is clear and leads to her senior team focusing on specific aspects of the school's work to very good effect. There is a strong sense of corporate responsibility throughout all levels of leadership. Middle leaders feel strongly held to account for delivering whole-school priorities and appreciate the varying degrees of independence they have, to bring about the required outcomes in ways most appropriate to their circumstances. Development planning at all levels is well targeted and marshals the high levels of staff commitment to very good effect. Senior leaders demonstrate a very good grasp of what needs to be done to improve the proportion of teaching that is outstanding; the improvement points identified by inspectors were closely aligned with the key priorities in the school's development plans. Continuing professional development is well targeted and effective. This commonality of purpose and the very good systems developed to monitor and evaluate outcomes give the school a very secure capacity to continue to improve.

Members of the governing body show a very high level of commitment to supporting the work of the headteacher and senior staff and also offer challenge, based on a very good knowledge of the quality of its outcomes. Through their work with parents in the school, and through connections in the parish, they are aware of the high level of parental expectations of the school and respond successfully. Both the school and its governing body value the very good links established with parents and local parishes. Although students and their parents have a voice in the work of the school, there is potential to develop this further and obtain significant advantages from involving them in more strategic developments. This potential was demonstrated by

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the success of involving students in working to develop the roof garden recently.

There is a strong and effective accent on equality of opportunity within the school. Designated staff monitor outcomes for identified groups of students and trigger appropriate intervention when required. The school is culturally diverse and this is celebrated. Students from different faith backgrounds share communal moments of reflection and this strengthens their spiritual and social development. The curriculum is based on GCSE provision, which meets the needs of the majority of students very well, but there is a range of alternative course and examination opportunities for students with a different balance of need. All aspects of safeguarding are secure and students' safety and welfare are paramount in all aspects of the school's work.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.

3 February 2012

Dear Students



Inspection of St Anne's Catholic School, Southampton SO15 2WZ

Thank you for the welcome you showed the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you, and seeing you work in lessons, very much. We also valued the various conversations we had with many of you, and the feedback on the questionnaires which many of you completed. You made a very significant contribution to the inspection.

St Anne's is a good school and some aspects of its work are outstanding. One of its key strengths is the very high quality of the leadership demonstrated by your headteacher, her senior staff and middle leaders. They are obviously devoted to obtaining the very best outcomes for you, and they are being very successful in maintaining current strengths, responding to the needs of the school community, and continually improving all aspects of its work. Another key strength is your behaviour. The inspection team was very impressed with your thoughtful, mature, calm and confident manner, and by the extent to which you maintain your individuality and self-assurance, yet subscribe whole-heartedly to the very strong and positive ethos of the school. You show great pride in your school, and we understood why after spending two days with you.

Teaching is good, and some is outstanding; this means that you achieve well. The leaders of the school know that by addressing aspects of teaching they can drive further improvements, and I agreed with them about the four areas to concentrate on. They are to ensure that all teaching:

- involves the constant assessment of what you understand in lessons, and responds appropriately
- is closely matched to the needs of groups and individuals
- provides you with high quality feedback about how to improve your work
- involves you and your parents and carers more closely in identifying how you can secure even higher levels of achievement.

You can read the full report on the Ofsted website. I know that you will continue to make strong contributions to your school community. I wish you all every happiness and success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Alan Taylor-Bennett
Her Majesty's Inspector

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