

St Anthony's School

Woodlands Lane, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 5PA

Inspection dates 29–30 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- St Anthony's remains an outstanding school where the achievement of pupils is far above that found in many similar schools. Despite the complexity of pupils' needs increasing since the last inspection, the commitment to excellence has seen standards maintained and sometimes improved even further.
- Teachers display a high level of commitment to their pupils and have extremely high expectations. Their excellent use of data to show individual progress enables them to ensure the maximum level of challenge for all their pupils. This also extends to social and emotional progress.
- Behaviour is exemplary and pupils look after each other in a caring way. Tremendous care is taken to ensure the safety of pupils who may be vulnerable.
- Leadership, including that of the governors, sets the tone for the whole school with its drive and determination for excellence. Leaders have tremendous expertise and use this to ensure that the needs of all pupils can be best met. Their excellent support has enabled teachers to become skilled practitioners.
- The school works very effectively to support the education of pupils in other schools and students at the local further education college. Leaders recognise the importance of sustaining and extending this work in the future.

Information about this inspection

- A total of 21 lessons were observed, taught by 21 teachers and including the Reception class in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at samples of work produced throughout the school.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers and pupils, and with representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- The 11 responses to the online survey, Parent View, were taken into account, as were the views of parents and carers expressed in a recent school questionnaire. The views of staff were gathered from discussions and from the responses to the staff questionnaire. The views of pupils were gathered from discussion with the school council and other pupils.
- A range of documents were looked at in detail including information on pupils' progress and tracking, teachers' planning and assessment, curriculum and schemes of work, the school self-evaluation and development plans, as well as a range of policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jackie Blount

Additional Inspector

Alan Jones

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Anthony's is a special school which, while designated as a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, takes pupils with a range of increasingly complex learning needs.
- Since the last inspection, the school has expanded its provision for pupils with an autistic spectrum disorder including a recent development to expand this into the local college of further education for students over the age of 16.
- All pupils are supported by a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding made available by the government for pupils who qualify for free school meals, are in the care of the local authority or who have parents or carers in the armed services) is below average.
- Virtually all pupils are of White British origin and none is at an early stage of learning English.
- The school is a designated specialist school for communication and interaction and is currently developing a model for sustaining this expertise into the future once funding ends at the end of this school year.
- The school has links with the University of Chichester and school leaders provide specialist input to its teacher training course.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2012 after previously being an assistant headteacher at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Continue to expand partnership working with local further education providers and the local authority in order to:
 - further promote outreach and the provision of expertise to mainstream schools following the ending of the additional resources received from specialist college status at the end of this school year
 - extend specialist provision in the post-16 sector utilising the school's expertise to sustain effective further education opportunities for pupils who have a range of learning disabilities, particularly autistic spectrum disorder.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- The school regularly collects data on the progress of every pupil. This shows clearly that from their starting points the proportion of pupils who make better than expected progress is far higher than that found nationally. Evidence also shows that there is no difference in the achievement of different groups and all are allowed to flourish.
- Some pupils start in Reception, although a majority join the school after a period in mainstream schools. Careful monitoring from the outset supports excellent care and maximises individual progress at whatever point a pupil joins.
- For some, particularly those with autistic spectrum disorder who had not been able to cope well in their previous schools, the expertise of staff enables them to make exceptional progress and reach levels far in excess of those attained in their previous schools.
- Teachers are held to account for the progress of their pupils and when this falls below the rate expected, programmes are drawn up that address specific needs and get pupils back on track. The information on progress is also used to set challenging targets. This sustains outstanding progress and excellent pupil engagement throughout the school.
- Pupils have complex learning needs and the school is careful to ensure that all have access to external qualifications that reflect individual abilities. The scope is wide, from the Certificate of Personal Progress for those with more severe learning disabilities through to GCSE for those whose needs are primarily around communication. This allows these pupils to gain passes at grades A* to C. The school is rightly proud of its outstanding results in 2012, continuing the trend of ever more impressive outcomes seen in recent years.
- St Anthony's works in strong partnership with Chichester College to provide continuing support for students on the autistic spectrum when they are past the school leaving age. Parents and carers of these students are extremely grateful for this highly effective partnership. It sees these pupils enrolled as college students, but continuing to be taught by specialist teachers from St Anthony's. This enables their outstanding progress to be sustained while being members of a further education community.
- Last year 43 pupils gained additional support through pupil premium funding and this was targeted carefully to ensure maximum benefit. This included the purchase of specialist equipment as well as supporting access to residential visits and other enrichment activities. Effective use of the premium supported their outstanding progress.
- Reading is very well promoted throughout the school. In Reception, children were observed learning their letters and the sounds that they make. While standards in reading are low, as is attainment in general, this reflects the learning difficulties of pupils. Of greater importance are the outstanding progress and achievement that they show from their individual starting points.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Teaching is outstanding because the needs of every pupil are known and the professional relationships between teachers and teaching assistants are exceptional in meeting these needs.
- There is a positive and direct link between the highly effective teaching that pupils receive and their outstanding achievement. Parents and carers fully appreciate this and there are strong links between home and school that also help sustain progress.
- Teachers have extremely high expectations and this is reflected in the great care that goes into planning. Teachers are determined to provide the best teaching possible, reflecting a commitment to equal opportunities and supporting individuals and identified groups in class, for example, boys and girls, or those who attract the pupil premium. Every lesson contains carefully considered activities that enable pupils to learn at their own level. This is because teachers know pupils' current achievement, since they use assessment and tracking information so effectively.

- Pupils really enjoy their lessons, which are marked by pace and challenge. Teachers show skill in their questioning which not only allows pupils to show how much they have understood but also supports them in developing their ideas, confidence and awareness. Nowhere was this better illustrated than in an outstanding Year 9 history lesson about slavery where a pupil asked why the word 'nigger' is unacceptable. Not only did the teacher give a full answer, she also encouraged discussion, reflecting the strong commitment to positive spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Work is marked regularly and constructive comments to help pupils improve it are made either in writing or through focused discussion. Care is taken to note new skills that have been learned and progress towards meeting learning targets is checked with rigour.
- Technology is used very effectively to support learning, both at the individual level of using a specific software program, or for the whole class making good use of the interactive whiteboards which are in every classroom.
- The expertise in the school not only supports inclusion in mainstream schools, but school leaders also contribute to the teacher training programmes of the University of Chichester and welcome students from the course into school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Behaviour is generally exemplary and little time is lost in lessons as a consequence. Pupils are allowed to remain engaged and become active learners, strongly supported by the positive rapport they have with staff.
- In some cases pupils arrive at the school displaying very challenging behaviour as part of their wider learning difficulties. In these cases personal behaviour programmes are implemented by staff with great consistency. Over time this supports very strong improvement and behaviour issues among older pupils are rare.
- Pupils talk about the dangers of bullying in its various forms, including cyber-bullying, and are aware of the risks inherent in the misuse of social networking sites. These dangers are reinforced by posters and artwork around the school. Pupils say that bullying is rare and incidents are dealt with effectively.
- Far more common is the support that pupils give each other. For example, in a music lesson three pupils sang solo verses in a song and the rest of the class applauded without prompting after listening carefully. This is another good example of the positive social, moral, spiritual and cultural development throughout the school.
- The nature of the difficulties faced by some pupils makes them potentially very vulnerable. The great care and attention given to risk assessment and to ensuring health and safety, before trips or residential experiences for example, are detailed and thorough. It helps make the school a very safe place.
- Attendance is high for a special school, a reflection of the fact that pupils enjoy their learning and being in school so much.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher has a dynamic vision for moving the school forward and for responding to current challenges. She has the overwhelming support of staff, parents, carers and pupils and is widely respected by professionals from other agencies who work with the school.
- The school works extremely well in partnership with the local authority, which supports the school positively in promoting the wider needs of special education, and also with the local college of further education. This is supporting the development of excellent practice in promoting inclusion for many pupils within mainstream settings, including sustaining places in continuing education after leaving school. It is a measure of its success that all parties are

looking for ways to best develop this relationship in the future.

- Systems to monitor the effectiveness of staff are very effective and form part of the scheme for appraisal and performance management. This helps them to become extremely skilled professionals. Staff understand their accountability for pupils' progress and the link to salary progression. Staff on the upper pay scale have clear additional responsibilities for which they are held to account.
 - Self-evaluation is rigorous and leads to the effective prioritisation of issues within the effective school development plan which is wholly focused on school improvement.
 - The curriculum is flexible and wide-ranging, so that despite the wide range of ability found in the school every pupil is able to access learning at the right level. It is reinforced through a range of clubs, activities and events which include residential opportunities for pupils.
 - Traditionally the school has used its expertise and resources as a specialist school to support other schools through outreach work. This source of additional funding will end at the end of the current school year. The school is already working closely with the local authority to ensure that other schools' access to its expertise and commitment to supporting inclusion will not be jeopardised.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is centrally involved in the process of school improvement and uses the range of professional skills it contains to very good effect. This includes understanding the school's performance in relation to similar schools. Governors monitor the effectiveness of the headteacher and other staff through well-established processes and have regular contact which provides detailed knowledge of the curriculum and of the progress and achievement of pupils. Having received effective training and support, they play a positive role in performance management. Regular contact between the chair of the finance committee and the bursar ensures close financial scrutiny which includes receipt of a detailed statement on the use of pupil premium funding so that a close eye is maintained on the effectiveness of this provision. Governors' statutory duties, such as those for safeguarding, are also carried out in an exemplary manner.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	126155
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	403759

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Hilary Riddell
Headteacher	Helen Ball
Date of previous school inspection	27 October 2010
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