

St Anselm's Catholic School

Old Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 3EN

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From their low starting points, students make good progress across a range of subjects. The proportion of students achieving five good GCSEs, including English and mathematics, has improved significantly and is now in line with the national average.
- All groups of students make good progress, including disabled students, those who have special educational needs and those students who are eligible for support through pupil premium funding.
- The sixth form is good and students make good progress. Increasing numbers of students are choosing to continue their post-16 studies at the school. Retention rates are improving.
- The majority of teaching is good because teachers plan lessons thoroughly and use their specialist subject knowledge to motivate and engage students. Data are used well to plan support that is appropriate to students' personal circumstances.
- Students' behaviour and safety are good. Students are polite and supportive in lessons and as they move around the school. Respect and concern for one another permeate the school community.
- The school's meticulous promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as their health and well-being, enables students to thrive in a supportive, harmonious and family-oriented learning community.
- The headteacher, capably supported by senior leaders, middle leaders and the governing body, has worked resolutely to ensure that both achievement and teaching have improved since the previous inspection.
- Governors have a clear idea of the strengths of the school and a very secure understanding of what needs to be done to improve further. They provide challenge and support to the school in well-balanced measures.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress for all groups of students is good but not yet outstanding. Over time, there has been too much variation in students' progress.
- The use of teaching assistants to actively support and engage students in their work is too variable.
- Teachers do not always anticipate when they should and should not intervene to reinforce students' learning.
- Teachers' written feedback is inconsistent and does not routinely provide students with clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 35 lessons and part-lessons including eight shared observations with senior members of the school's leadership team. They also conducted a number of short visits to classrooms, focusing on teaching and behaviour.
- Inspectors examined students' books across a range of subjects including English, mathematics and science, focusing on attainment, progress, and the quality of marking and feedback.
- They looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, records of the monitoring of teaching, safeguarding documentation, and attainment and progress data.
- Formal and informal discussions took place with students in all key stages including sixth form students.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders and other staff. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of 132 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as 52 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Paul Metcalf, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Jackie Jones	Additional Inspector
Cliff Mainey	Additional Inspector
Jason Wye	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Anselm's Catholic School is an average-sized 11 to 18 voluntary-aided Catholic school. The school is mixed but the proportion of girls is below the national average. The school has specialist science status.
- The majority of students are White British with small numbers of Other White, Indian, Irish and African students. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is in line with the national average and for those who speak English as an additional language it is above.
- The school has a physical disability unit on the site. The proportion of students supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national average. The proportion of students supported by school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for students known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children from service families, is below the national average.
- An increasing number of Year 7 students are eligible for catch-up funding which is for students who did not achieve the expected Level 4 in reading or mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Ten students are educated off site at Canterbury Academy, Grosvenor House and the East Kent Hospital School.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress at the end of Year 11.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching, accelerate students' progress and raise achievement by:
 - making better use of teaching assistants in the classroom to actively support and engage students in their work
 - supporting teachers to anticipate when they should and should not intervene to reinforce students' learning
 - improving written feedback to students to offer clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work
 - identifying and sharing the very best teaching practice from across the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The proportion of students gaining five A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, has improved significantly since the last inspection. Although outcomes are now in line with national averages, students' progress and achievement are good given their starting points.
- Underperformance in English in 2012 has been rigorously addressed so that attainment in English in 2013 was in line with national averages, and the proportion of students meeting and exceeding national levels of progress was favourable. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work confirm these improvements are being maintained.
- All groups of students, including those who are disabled, those who have special educational needs and those speaking English as an additional language, make similar progress to their peers, and occasionally better progress. The school tracks the progress of groups very well and quickly identifies and addresses any underperformance.
- The focus on the development of basic skills and the raising of students' self-esteem are having a positive impact on those students in receipt of pupil premium funding. Gaps are closing and school data show that the gap is reducing further in 2014. These students are approximately one level behind their peers in mathematics and half a level behind in English.
- Students supported by the Year 7 catch-up premium achieve well. Funds have been spent to help students to improve their work in literacy and numeracy. School data confirm that the vast majority have made significant progress in their reading and spelling as well as in English and mathematics. Intervention ensures that these students make good progress in Key Stage 3.
- The school enters few students early for GCSE examinations and teachers ensure that those who are entered achieve the grades expected of them. Students attending off-site provision make good progress on courses that are personalised for their specific needs. Most parents agree that students make good progress.
- Students made good progress in lessons seen and over time. There was no discernible difference between the performance of girls and boys. The school has worked hard to address boys' previous underperformance and has been successful in closing the gap by raising awareness, using targeted support and experimenting with single sex classes.
- Students enter the school with low literacy skills which are addressed through additional support in English lessons and further support across the curriculum. Students' numeracy skills are developed in mathematics lessons and do not pose a barrier to learning in other subjects. Students' information and communication technology skills are routinely developed.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Attainment on entry is low as some higher attaining students choose to continue their education at neighbouring schools. Attainment overall is below national averages but progress, for those remaining, is good. Staying-on rates and retention rates are improving. Significant numbers of students continue to good universities.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and in some cases outstanding. Nonetheless, not all teaching is at this level to ensure that all students make rapid and sustained progress in all subjects.
- In lessons where teaching is good or better, teachers have strong subject knowledge and offer good explanations for difficult concepts. Lesson planning is strong, expectations are high and lessons offer a variety of different teaching strategies to motivate, encourage and engage students. Relationships are respectful and supportive.
- In a successful Year 9 science lesson, the teacher offered a very effective starter activity which reviewed previous work and ensured that all students were quickly engaged. Very careful questioning checked students' understanding of the video on the ethics of genetic testing and supported them in understanding subject-specific vocabulary.
- Disabled students and those who have special educational needs, as well as those from different

ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language, benefit considerably from teachers' knowledge and the concern which they demonstrate for their individual needs.

- In the majority of lessons, teaching assistants' roles were clear, and students provided with extra support during the lesson made at least good progress. Occasionally, teaching assistants had not been adequately briefed and those students being supported made less progress as a result.
- Where teaching is not so good, it was often because teachers failed to check students' understanding or else to anticipate when to intervene to support students' learning, especially higher attaining students in the class. In some lessons teachers did not give students enough time to think about their work and, in other lessons, students were left floundering when they might have benefited from timely intervention.
- The quality of teachers' feedback on students' work is inconsistent across the school. Students understand how well they are doing but feedback does not always explain the next steps and provide students with clear guidance on what they need to do next to improve their work.
- The majority of sixth form teaching enables students to learn well and make good progress from low starting points. Relationships between teachers and students are caring and reassuring. Students confirmed that the work is challenging but agree that they are well supported by their teachers so they are able to build effectively upon their knowledge and understanding, and make good progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. In almost all lessons, students demonstrate positive attitudes, concentrate well and show an enthusiasm for learning. However, their behaviour is not outstanding because the impact of this is not consistent across all subjects and because students are not always sufficiently well prepared for their lessons.
- The school's behaviour logs show a reduction in recorded incidents commensurate with students' views that behaviour is getting better. Punctuality to school and to lessons is suitably monitored and concerns are always pursued and addressed. Attendance has shown year-on-year improvement and the number of persistent absentees has dropped.
- The number of fixed-term exclusions has reduced as a consequence of higher expectations and tailored strategies to support individuals and their families. There were no permanent exclusions recorded. The behaviour of students attending off-site provision is good and their attendance is high.
- The school's work to keep students safe and secure is particularly good. Students feel very safe and understand the risks associated with the internet. They treat each other with respect and courtesy. They have a good awareness of different forms of bullying such as cyber bullying, homophobic behaviour, and religious and ethnic intolerance.
- Students are very confident that any instances of bullying or harassment will be dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. They confirm that the management of behaviour by staff is consistent and clear. Parents and staff agree that students are safe at school.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is a very strong and committed leader who has a clear vision for the school which is shared by staff, parents, students and governors. His evaluation of the school's strengths and areas to develop is accurate and based on secure evidence. The actions identified in the school's improvement plan are realistic.
- Leaders and governors are passionate about improving teaching and learning while maintaining high aspirations for students' welfare and well-being. Evidence of the recent impact of senior leaders' work includes a focus on the school's practices and procedures such as that for deciding when teachers might apply for threshold payments.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because, although the leadership of

teaching is effective in improving students' progress, not enough teaching is outstanding and students' progress is still not high enough. Senior leaders have the confidence of staff and parents. Capacity to improve further is good.

- The school has a very good awareness of the quality of teaching. During joint lesson observations carried out with the inspection team, senior leaders were accurate in their judgements on the quality of teaching and provided clear and targeted feedback on exactly what teachers needed to do to improve.
- The curriculum provides students with a wide range of activities and subjects which promote their good attitudes and are suited to their abilities and aspirations. The strong Catholic ethos encourages students to be involved in charitable and community work. The curriculum, combined with good teaching, ensures that students are well prepared for their next stage in education, employment and training.
- The development of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is a particular strength of the school and strongly supported through subjects, assemblies and tutor time. Equality of opportunity is effectively promoted throughout the school.
- Students have many opportunities to participate in the life of the school through the school council, house competitions and involvement in decision making such as the quality of the food and prices in the school canteen.
- Parents who responded to the online survey were totally positive about the school and the quality of leadership and management. It is clear from the number of positive comments received during the inspection that the reputation of the school is continuing to grow. Much comment was directed to the family feel of the school and the positive ethos.
- The local authority has been proactive in supporting the school to improve by developing senior leaders and middle leaders as well as providing training for the governors in their roles and responsibilities. Support for the English department has been successful in bringing about necessary improvements as evidenced in the 2013 results.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students are very well organised and meet the latest requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The school benefits considerably from a governing body that brings a wealth of experience and expertise to their roles. Governors share the headteacher's passion for improving teaching and thus raising students' achievement.
 - They scrutinise the school's own data and data provided by Ofsted so that they can challenge the headteacher regarding the achievement of students and quality of teaching. They rigorously monitor the performance of the school against other schools nationally.
 - They know the school well and they are aware of the impact of pupil premium funding on students' performance. They hold underperforming staff to account and make sure that pay awards are linked closely to the quality of teaching and students' achievement.
 - Safeguarding requirements are met and governors fully understand their importance. They visit the school regularly, speak with students and consult with parents, for example through surveys and attending open evenings.

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	118918
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	426554

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	1044
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Johnstone
Headteacher	Mike Walters
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 October 2011
Telephone number	01227 826200
Fax number	01227 826201
Email address	office@st-alsems.org.uk

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