

Inspection of St Anne's Roman Catholic High School, Stockport

Glenfield Road, Heaton Chapel, Stockport, Cheshire SK4 2QP

Inspection dates: 21–22 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The people who are responsible for this school have failed its pupils for far too long. Leaders have not ensured that the school is a safe and happy place in which pupils can flourish.

The school environment is not calm and orderly. During social times, a significant number of pupils behave in an unruly way. Pupils that we spoke to said that fights are not uncommon. Homophobic language is commonplace. There are also incidents of racist behaviour. Pupils say that bullying is a problem in school and is often not dealt with well by staff.

For too long, leaders have not had high enough expectations for pupils and the standard of education that they receive. The frequent leadership changes over many years have made the situation worse. Until this year, pupils have not had stability. This has changed with the arrival of the new headteacher. Pupils told us that they feel valued by him. They appreciate the genuine commitment that he has shown to the school.

With the exception of English, pupils do not learn well enough in almost every other subject. Consequently, they do not achieve well by the end of Year 11.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school is in a worse position now than it was at the time of the last inspection. Leaders, including governors, the diocese and the local authority, have not acted with the required urgency to address the school's significant failings. They have been unable to create an environment in which pupils can thrive and achieve well.

The arrival of the new headteacher has brought new hope to this dire situation. He has a clear grasp of the deep-rooted issues that have dogged this school in recent years. His integrity and commitment to the school and its pupils is undoubted. A national leader of education is now providing much-needed practical support to the headteacher. Very recent additions to the governing body, including a new chair and vice chair, are offering appropriate challenge and support to the new headteacher.

The headteacher understands how important it is for all pupils to benefit from a high-quality curriculum, particularly in key stage 3. Recently, he has been working with subject leaders to construct a more ambitious curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9. The headteacher describes this work as 'in its infancy'. Currently, pupils do not benefit from a well-planned curriculum.

Subject leaders and teachers are not clear about the knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. They do not give enough consideration to the order in which pupils learn about key concepts. This hinders pupils' understanding and progress. For example, in mathematics, pupils study trigonometry before they have the required knowledge to do this successfully.

The curriculum has not enabled pupils to gain the knowledge and skills that they require to achieve highly. In recent years, the progress that pupils have made by the time that they leave school has been below the national average. The exception to this is in English, where pupils make significantly better progress than the national average.

Subject leaders in English are highly ambitious for all their pupils. They are very clear about what they want their pupils to know and remember. They also understand how they can best make this happen. The curriculum in this subject is very well thought out. It allows pupils to make connections in their learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not do well at this school. Leaders do not have high enough expectations of what these pupils can achieve. Nor do leaders ensure that teachers understand how to meet the needs of this group of pupils. Teachers do not routinely help pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and be successful.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons is variable. Strong relationships do exist between teachers and pupils, most noticeably in the English department. Where this is the case, pupils' positive attitudes contribute to their learning. However, this is not evident across the school. Too many staff do not have high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons. This means that learning is often disrupted.

The behaviour of a significant number of pupils during social times and between lessons is particularly concerning. At these times of the day, the school is not a calm and orderly place. Leaders do not manage these times well. Some pupils are openly defiant and disrespectful towards staff. That said, many pupils at St Anne's are well-mannered and conduct themselves in a mature manner.

A high number of pupils are excluded from school. Exclusion figures are particularly high for boys, disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. In recent years, leaders have not kept sufficiently detailed records of exclusions.

Pupils' attendance is low and is showing no sign of significant improvement. This is particularly the case for pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged. Of great concern is that nearly half of the disadvantaged pupils in school do not attend regularly. Leaders have not been recording pupils' attendance accurately. This is particularly the case for a small number of pupils who are on inappropriate part-time timetables.

Until very recently, the leadership of behaviour and attendance was weak. The new assistant headteacher appointed to lead on this area has only been in post for two weeks. She has started the enormous task of getting to grips with the legacy of poor practice in this area of the school.

Leaders have not made pupils' personal development a high enough priority. This has had a negative impact on the culture of the school. Too many pupils do not

respect and value people's differences. This is particularly the case in relation to sexual orientation and race. Leaders do not ensure that pupils are prepared well for life in a diverse society.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

In recent years, there have been significant weaknesses relating to safeguarding at this school. The new headteacher's actions have brought about some improvements. However, too many concerns remain. The safeguarding culture in the school is still not good enough.

Many pupils do not feel safe in school. The main reason for this is the unruly and anti-social behaviour of a significant number of pupils. Some staff, parents and carers also raised concerns about pupils' safety in their online survey responses. Leaders' inability to deal effectively with the poor behaviour of some pupils is having a negative impact on pupils' safety.

A small number of pupils are on inappropriate part-time timetables. Leaders have not given due regard to the safeguarding arrangements for these pupils.

There have been a high number of referrals to the local authority designated officer since September. The local authority has concerns about the school's safeguarding culture and practice.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There have been endemic weaknesses in the leadership of this school for many years. Leaders, including those on the governing body, in the diocese and the local authority, have not acted with the required urgency. They have not demonstrated the expertise and capacity needed to bring about the sustained improvement that this school requires. This means that, for many years, pupils have not benefited from a good education. Furthermore, the school is in a worse position now than when it was last inspected. Leaders must take urgent action to create a culture in school in which pupils can flourish. Governors, the diocese and the local authority must provide the new headteacher with the support that he needs to tackle the significant weaknesses that exist across the school so that pupils can benefit from a good-quality education.
- Leaders have not created a safe environment for all pupils. The unruly and anti-social behaviour of a significant number of pupils means that leaders cannot ensure the safety of all pupils. A small number of pupils are on inappropriate part-time timetables. In these situations, the safeguarding arrangements of pupils are compromised. A high number of incidents have necessitated referrals to the local

authority designated officer. Leaders must waste no time in establishing a strong safeguarding culture in the school.

- Plans to improve the curriculum are at a very early stage. With the exception of English, the current curriculum is not well planned, sequenced or implemented. This is particularly the case in key stage 3. Subject leaders and teachers do not think carefully enough about what they want pupils to know and remember. This hinders pupils' understanding and progress. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is designed and implemented well in all subjects so that pupils can learn effectively and achieve well.
- Leaders do not support pupils with SEND effectively. Leaders' expectations for these pupils are too low and they do not achieve well. A high proportion of these pupils do not attend school regularly and are frequently excluded. Leaders must prioritise the needs of these pupils. They must ensure that teachers understand how to help pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and be successful.
- Equality of opportunity and respect for diversity are not promoted throughout the school. Leaders have failed to create a culture in which people's differences, particularly in relation to sexual orientation and race, are respected and valued. Pupils' casual use of homophobic language is commonplace. Leaders must make pupils' personal development a higher priority so that pupils are better prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders must also ensure that there are systems in place to help staff deal more effectively with bullying.
- During social times and between lessons, the behaviour of some pupils is unacceptable. There are too many incidents of unruly behaviour, including fights. In lessons, too many pupils have their learning disrupted by poor behaviour. Leaders must take urgent action to promote pupils' ability to regulate their own behaviour. Leaders must also help all teachers to form positive relationships with their pupils and create strong learning environments in their classrooms.
- Pupils' attendance is low. This is particularly the case for pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged. This means that too many pupils are missing out on their learning. Leaders must act to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	106144
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10121969
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	664
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Nish
Headteacher	Daniel Wright
Website	www.st-annes.stockport.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	21–22 November 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The new headteacher took up his post on 1 September 2019. This is the ninth headteacher in the school in the last 10 years.
- There have been recent additions to the governing body. These include a new chair and vice chair of the governing body, who took up their roles in January 2020.
- The school uses the following alternative providers for a small number of pupils: Highfields Inclusion Partnership, The Pendlebury Centre, and Manchester Vocational and Learning Academy.
- This is a Roman Catholic school. The school was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act in January 2017.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons

responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

- We held meetings with the headteacher and senior and middle leaders. We also held meetings with the special educational needs coordinator, a group of heads of year, a newly qualified teacher, those responsible for safeguarding, those responsible for behaviour and attendance and those with oversight of pupils' personal development.
- We also met with three members of the governing body, including the new chair and vice chair. We also met with the national leader of education who has recently started to support the headteacher.
- We held telephone conversations with three representatives of the local authority and with representatives of two of the alternative providers used by the school.
- We checked on safeguarding documentation, including the school's appointment checks on staff. We reviewed the minutes of recent governing body meetings, leaders' self-evaluation and their school improvement plan.
- We considered the views of the 218 pupils and the 27 staff who responded to Ofsted's online surveys. We also considered the views expressed by parents in the 37 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including the comments received via the free-text facility.
- We spoke with groups of pupils formally and informally to gather their views, particularly on behaviour and safety.
- We did deep dives in English, mathematics, science and history. We met with subject leaders, pupils and teaching staff, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.

Inspection team

Anne Seneviratne, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ruth Makin	Ofsted Inspector
Alyson Middlemass	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Hampson	Ofsted Inspector

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