

# INSPECTION REPORT

## ST. ANTHONY'S SCHOOL

Margate

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 119037

Headteacher: Mr Ray O'Dell

Reporting inspector: Ms Margaret Julia Goodchild  
15918

Dates of inspection: 4 – 6 December 2000

Inspection number: 223683

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	3 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St. Anthony's Way Margate Cliftonville Margate Kent
Postcode:	CT9 3RA
Telephone number:	01843 292015
Fax number:	01843 231574
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Daphne Peachy
Date of previous inspection:	March 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
M J Goodchild 15918	Registered inspector
E Langford 19727	Lay inspector
D McCarthy 23886	Team inspector
J Hall 14691	Team inspector
A Tattersall 20466	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Q.I.C.S.  
Ibsley  
4 West Cliff Road  
Dawlish  
Devon  
EX7 9EB

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Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a community special school serving the needs of pupils, aged 3 to 16, with moderate learning difficulties. About a third of pupils aged 11 to 16 have additional emotional and behavioural difficulties and a small number of pupils have specific learning difficulties (dyslexia), speech and communication difficulties, physical difficulties or autism. A high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school also has a high percentage of pupils who are 'looked after' by the local authority and a significant number of pupils whose previous educational histories were fragmented with times where they did not go to school. There are 175 pupils, with almost twice as many boys as girls and a majority of pupils aged 11 to 16. Fourteen children attend the nursery part time for assessment, before continuing in the primary department or moving to mainstream schools.

## HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Anthony's is a very effective school, with many excellent features. Standards are high compared with similar schools and pupils achieve very well. Teaching and learning are very good and there is a significant amount of teaching that is excellent. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and the school is very well managed. It provides excellent value for money.

### What the school does well

- Excellent leadership and very good management give rise to a very successful school.
- Standards are high compared with similar schools and pupils achieve very well.
- Very good teaching results in very effective learning, and ensures that pupils of all abilities make very good progress.
- Assessment is exceptionally thorough, ensuring that work is very well matched to pupils' needs.
- The high quality curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of learning opportunities.
- Pupils make very good progress in their personal development and provision for spiritual development is excellent.
- The school provides a high level of care and support to its pupils.

### What could be improved

- Communication with parents could be improved, and the setting of homework needs to be more tightly organised with clearer expectations.
- Aspects of accommodation are unsatisfactory and have an impact on the quality of education.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school responded very effectively to the issues raised by the previous inspection, in March 1996, and it has made very good improvement since that time. Pupils' achievement is now very good, standards have risen, and pupils have opportunities to gain a wider range of qualifications by the time they leave school. The quality of teaching and learning has improved so that it is very good; no unsatisfactory teaching was seen during this inspection and teaching was frequently at least very good. Aspects of leadership and management have been further refined and the school has achieved not only Investors in People status but also Investors in Success. There have been substantial improvements to the accommodation through much rebuilding; further work is needed to provide adequate indoor sports facilities, to improve provision for children under five and to ensure that the sound from music lessons does not disturb learning in other areas.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 14	by age 16	<b>Key</b>  very good      A good              B satisfactory      C unsatisfactory   D poor                E
Speaking and listening	A	A	A	A	
Reading	B	A	A	A	
Writing	B	A	A	A	
Mathematics	B	A	A	A	
Personal, social and health education	A	A	A	A	
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	

Pupils' achievement is high and the school's results in National Curriculum assessments at age 7, 11 and 14 were well above those for similar schools nationally in 2000. At age 16, 48% of pupils achieved at least one GCSE and many pupils did very well in the Diploma of Vocational Education. The school's targets are appropriately high and opportunities for pupils to gain nationally recognised qualifications by the time they leave school at age 16 have been improved to raise standards further.

Pupils of all abilities make very good progress in English, mathematics, personal, social and health education and in the individual targets set for them. Their progress in science is good up to the age of 13 and very good from 14 to 16. In other subjects, progress is at least good and in music it is excellent. Pupils are making very good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills, and this supports their work very effectively in all other areas of the curriculum.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' very positive attitudes support high achievement and they gain much enjoyment from learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The school is orderly, and pupils' very good behaviour supports the progress that they make.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils make very good progress in personal development, and relate very well with one another and with the staff.
Attendance	Attendance is well above average.

Pupils are polite, friendly and helpful. They speak with much enthusiasm about the school,

saying that learning is fun, that they have many friends and think highly of their teachers.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 3 - 5 years	aged 5 - 7 years	aged 7 - 11 years	aged 11 - 14 years	aged 14 - 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Teaching and learning make a major contribution to the high standards. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection and teaching was at least good in 98% of lessons. Teaching was very good or better in 66% of lessons and excellent in 20%. Teaching is very good in English and mathematics; it is good in science for pupils up to the age of 13 and very good for those aged 14 to 16. It is at least good in other subjects and frequently very good. Teaching in music and in the Year 6 class is nearly always excellent, with much exemplary practice. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils are challenged to work hard and to do their best. Probing questioning makes them think deeply; excellent use is made of resources, so that lessons are often lively and stimulating. Tasks are carefully matched to pupils' learning needs and teachers manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. As a result, pupils listen carefully and concentrate very well, showing a readiness and desire to learn.

The school is effective in meeting the needs of all its pupils and pays close attention to the development of basic skills. It has been very effective in implementing the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy, both within English and mathematics lessons and across the curriculum. The best teaching of literacy and numeracy is exemplary, enabling pupils to make rapid progress in acquiring skills that serve them well in all subjects of the curriculum.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is most thoroughly planned and informed by very detailed assessment: it offers rich, varied and relevant learning opportunities that ensure pupils make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school is very effective in meeting the special educational needs of all its pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good, including that for moral, social and cultural development. Provision for spiritual development is excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares very well for its pupils: all feel able to go and talk to their teachers and say that any problem is quickly dealt with.

Religious education, art and music contribute much to pupils' spiritual development and assemblies are of high quality. The school's child protection systems are excellent, those for



managing behaviour are very effective, and the health and welfare officer provides a high level of care for pupils.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership: he values all his staff and brings out the best in them. Others with management responsibilities fulfil their roles very effectively. Staff as a whole work together as a strong and coherent team with a shared commitment to excellence.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. Governors are well informed about the school, closely involved in the planning of developments, in the allocation of funds and in monitoring the school's effectiveness.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is very thorough in evaluating its own performance and modifying its practices to improve what it offers pupils.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes excellent use of its resources and is exceptionally effective in achieving best value for money. The very low budget makes its success particularly impressive.

Leadership and management are focused very effectively on raising standards and on continuously improving and developing provision: this makes for a dynamic school which embraces change yet a change that is founded on very firm foundations.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vast majority of parents feel that the school expects their children to try hard.</li> <li>• Parents believe that their children are making good progress.</li> <li>• They consider the school to be well led and managed.</li> <li>• They are pleased that their children like coming to school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A significant number of parents would like their children to have more homework.</li> <li>• A significant minority believe there are too few activities arranged outside normal lesson time.</li> <li>• A significant minority feel that they are not kept sufficiently informed about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• A minority are critical of pupils' behaviour in school.</li> </ul>

Inspectors' findings agree with parents' positive views about the school: pupils are making very good progress; teachers have high expectations; the school is very well managed; pupils are clearly happy and enjoy school. Parents' critical comments about the school are not upheld by the inspection, except that the school could further improve some aspects of its communication with parents, and tighten up on its expectations for homework.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

## **Excellent leadership and very good management give rise to a very successful school**

1. The headteacher is an excellent leader who provides clear educational direction to the school. He is exceptionally skilled at making the most of all the resources at his disposal, whether human or material. It is evident that he values all his staff a great deal and succeeds in bringing out the best in them, so that they subsequently work to bring out the best in their pupils. He is very effective in delegating responsibility to managers at all levels and empowering them to make a meaningful contribution to the school's success. He shows particular flair in squeezing maximum value from the school's limited budget and has achieved much more than could be expected given the low funding the school receives compared with similar special schools nationally. Most remarkably, as a qualified builder, he has physically built and improved much of the school's accommodation to provide pupils with better learning opportunities.
2. The delegation of responsibility for the primary, secondary and pre-vocational departments to the deputy headteachers works very well, and a number of staff have specific areas of responsibility which they fulfil very efficiently. The co-ordination of subjects is very effective and there is some excellent management in the way that pupils' work is assessed and the way that the curriculum is planned. The arrangements for staff training and the induction of new teachers, and the school's system for integrating pupils – where appropriate – into mainstream schools are excellently managed. Those with management responsibilities and other staff work very effectively together and form a strong team committed to developing further the quality of education and raising standards.
3. The school has a systematic programme for improving teaching and learning through monitoring lessons and looking at pupils' work. Senior managers observe each teacher every term and there is detailed discussion about what they have seen as well as written feedback. The effectiveness of this system is evident in the amount of very good and excellent teaching. There is similar close monitoring of curriculum planning, of assessment records, and of behaviour management. There are very clear lines of management and responsibility, making for coherent management and much analysis of how well the school is performing and how it might improve. Governors are appropriately involved and, with the establishment of sub-committees, have become more effective than at the time of the last inspection. Governors make announced and unannounced visits to the school, and observe lessons in subjects for which they have been given responsibility. Subject co-ordinators report to the governors' curriculum sub-committee and governors frequently attend staff training. Three members of the governors' finance sub-committee attended training in performance management, and all the targets governors set the headteacher and senior managers last year have been achieved.
4. Financial planning is excellent and internal financial control is very good: the budget is exceptionally tightly controlled and this is the only way the school manages to achieve so much on so little. The senior managers are fully involved with the headteacher in preparing the draft proposals for the budget, and there is consultation with all the staff before putting recommendations to the governing body's finance sub-committee. The school's plans for development are thoroughly reviewed by governors, and accounts are systematically analysed to ensure spending matches intended developments. The school always seeks to get the best possible value for its money in planning and spending. As well as the headteacher keeping costs down by undertaking building improvements himself, he makes sure that any quotations for work beat the cheapest price offered through Kent County Council and many jobs have been completed by local

tradesmen who have worked at very low prices or, indeed, provided their services at cost.

5. Staff at all levels are very thoughtful about what they do, seeking always to improve the school. This is evident in the high quality documentation – policies, curriculum planning, assessment records - and in all aspects of school life. After the last inspection, the school responded not only to the key issues for action but analysed the report closely and acted upon every minor ‘criticism’ within the body of the report. The school’s plans for development are highly detailed and identify priorities very effectively, readily embracing national and local developments. Staff and governors are all closely involved in the planning process and governors are well informed not only about the school’s strengths but also about areas in which further development is possible. There are detailed development plans in all subjects, and staff with particular responsibilities are all required to evaluate improvement at the end of each year and to set new targets for further development.
6. The school has been successful in attracting high quality teachers and it works very well to enable all staff to improve their skills and become as effective as possible. Management responsibilities are made very clear, so that new teachers know exactly to whom they can turn for help and recently appointed staff say that the support they receive is ‘superb’. The induction programme is exceptionally thorough, covering a wide range of topics to ensure that staff are thoroughly informed and able to operate at the level expected by senior managers. Guidance notes are held in each classroom and so provide information to support assistants as well as teachers.
7. Learning support assistants are generally used very well and they are of high calibre, supporting pupils’ progress very effectively. Particularly good support was seen in science, in information and communication technology, in swimming, and in the Year 6 class, but support is very good in many lessons. The quality of the learning support staff helps to overcome the school having more pupils per teacher than similar schools nationally.
8. The school is able to achieve a great deal despite its very low budget allocation. As a result of excellent financial planning, the school has managed to spend more on learning resources than other schools that receive a similar budget allocation. The level of resourcing in most subjects is, therefore, good and in some areas very good, and the school has managed to finance all Year 10 and 11 pupils spending a day each week at college.

### **Standards are high compared with similar schools and pupils achieve very well**

9. The school’s standards, as measured by examinations and teachers’ assessment, are high compared with schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties nationally. This is the result of very good teaching and learning, thorough assessment and a rich and very carefully planned curriculum.
10. Seven year olds are attaining standards that are above those found in similar schools. In 2000, National Curriculum assessment at age seven indicated high levels of attainment in English, with 60 percent of pupils achieving Level 1 or above and 20 percent achieving Level 2. Results in speaking and listening were especially high, but results for reading and writing were also well above those for similar schools. In mathematics, results were in line with the national average for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, whilst in science they were above average.

11. Again at age eleven, pupils attain standards that are above average. In 2000, National Curriculum assessment at age eleven in English indicated standards above similar schools, with 42 percent of pupils achieving Level 2, and attainment in reading and especially in writing were higher than this. In mathematics, results were broadly in line those nationally. In science, results were better than those of similar schools for pupils achieving Level 1 or above - with no pupil working towards Level 1 – and in line with results nationally at Level 2.
12. By the age of 14, attainment is high compared with similar schools. In 2000, National Curriculum teacher assessment at age fourteen was above average in English, with 79 percent of pupils achieving Level 2 or above and 25 percent achieving Level 3. Results in mathematics were high, with 46 percent of pupils achieving Level 3 or above, 33 percent achieving Level 4 or above, and four percent achieving Level 5. Results in science were particularly high, with all pupils reaching at least Level 2, 67 percent achieving Level 3 or above, 29 percent achieving Level 4 or above and eight percent achieving Level 5. These results were very high compared with those achieved by pupils in similar schools.
13. At age 16, 48 percent of pupils gained one A\* to G grade at GCSE in 2000, compared with 17.9 percent in schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties nationally. Twelve pupils were entered for GCSE in mathematics and all gained a pass at A\* to G, with the majority achieving an E grade or better. One pupil passed GCSE in art – through a mainstream secondary school - with a grade B, and one was entered - again through a mainstream school - for science GCSE and obtained a grade D. Nineteen pupils achieved a full pass in the City & Guilds Diploma of Vocational Education, many completing case studies which are at a higher level. After leaving school at 16, the majority of students from St Anthony's went on to a vocational access course at a further education college, to study for a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) and one for a General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) Intermediate course. Two pupils joined the army and another found employment.
14. Pupils' work in lessons across the curriculum in English, mathematics and science shows that pupils are making very good progress and achieving very well when their prior attainment is taken into account. This is true of pupils with all types of special educational need, including those who are autistic and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. If anything, pupils' attainment is often higher than that suggested by test and examination results. This was evident in an excellent science lesson in Year 9, where pupils clearly understood and could define terms like 'filtration' and 'evaporation'. They made predictions, conducted experiments, and analysed and explained results in a unit of work on particle theory which involved separating mixtures to recover a solid from a liquid. They achieve particularly well when teaching is at its best but there is enough very good teaching in all subjects and for pupils of all ages to ensure very good progress much of the time.
15. Achievement in all subjects is underpinned by the very good progress pupils make in speaking and listening, readily answering questions and talking about their work, and in reading and writing. Their progress in this area serves them very well not only in school but also in preparation for life after school.
16. Pupils aged 5 to 7 learn to distinguish between different letters of the alphabet, holding letters, choosing them and picking letters out in words. From age 7 to 11, they make excellent progress in creating stories through teachers' effective demonstration and encouragement. In one class, the teacher starts off a story and then invites each pupil in turn to add a line until the story is complete and, by this means, they make exceptional gains in their understanding of how stories are constructed and in their written work.

Their progress in recording their own simple stories and in grasping punctuation is excellent, and what they have achieved in Year 6 forms the foundation for further writing on a range of themes in Years 7, 8 and 9. High quality work on display reveals how much progress pupils make in their ability to express themselves in writing, each piece of work showing that pupils had thought about a given topic for themselves before writing about it, sometimes with some help, and finally presenting it beautifully - using word processing and illustration - for display. In Years 10 and 11, pupils write at some length, for example as part of the English Certificate of Achievement, and further develop their ability to organise information in writing and in labelled diagrams. By the time they leave, many pupils write fluently in sentences that are logically arranged and are able to discuss quite complex pieces of writing or details of a set book, and then make notes that show they have understood the essential points. By the age of 16, many pupils read with considerable accuracy – even when vocabulary is technical and sentence structures relatively complex - and some with good expression.

**Very good teaching results in very effective learning, and ensures that pupils of all abilities make very good progress**

17. Teaching makes a major contribution to the high standards pupils achieve and to their overall development. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection and teaching was at least good in 98 percent of lessons. Teaching was very good or better in 66 percent of lessons and excellent in 20 percent. Since teaching is almost invariably good or better and frequently at least very good, the vast majority of lessons include a range of positive features that enable pupils to make good or more frequently very good progress. Furthermore, teachers' high expectations are matched by pupils' very positive attitudes and the two, in combination, enable high quality learning to take place.
18. Teachers are particularly skilled at asking questions that probe pupils' knowledge and push them to new levels of understanding. This requires all pupils to think deeply in an attempt to answer, challenges high attaining pupils and furthers all pupils' knowledge and understanding when one or two, but more often several, pupils put up their hands to answer. Teachers also have high expectations for behaviour and expect all pupils to try hard throughout the lesson. They manage pupils' behaviour exceptionally well, including the behaviour of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties – most of whom enter the school at age 11 or above and who are very effectively integrated. As a result, pupils are orderly and obedient, but also alert, quick to respond and eager to learn. They show an intense desire to be chosen to answer questions or to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. They have very good listening skills and readily speak in class. They work very effectively together, for instance in drama, where they come together in small groups to perform to the class.
19. Planning is frequently detailed and lessons are very carefully structured to ensure that learning builds on pupils' prior attainment but also provides scope for clear gains in knowledge and understanding. Set tasks are challenging and carefully chosen to provide very good opportunities for learning, as well as being motivating. Teachers keep very thorough records of pupils' achievement and use assessment information very effectively when planning their lessons. Work is therefore frequently matched to different abilities and special educational needs in the class. As a result, lessons are brisk and lively, and pupils gain exceptional enjoyment from learning. They sustain a high level of concentration, persisting with set tasks. Many are keen to talk in detail about their work and they know that they are making very good progress. For example, pupils in an art lesson showed real interest when describing how they had mixed different colours, explaining which colours could be added to make a green darker. They volunteered pleasing experiences they had had with colour and talked about how they had discovered

different possible effects. Individual pupils collaborated very well, building on what others said and showing a great deal of enthusiasm about one another's successes in particular pieces of work they had done.

20. Teachers make very good use of learning support assistants, communicating high expectations to them so that they, in turn, are very effective and work in a way which complements teachers' intentions. Support staff focus very much on pupils' learning, clarifying points, and providing the next step in explanation or challenge to keep individuals moving on in the completion of the task that the teacher has set. It is clear that learning support assistants have a very good awareness of the needs of the pupils and classes with whom they work, and that they are well informed about teachers' plans for individual pupils as well as what is to be achieved by the class as a whole.
21. Teachers make excellent use of resources in the classroom, carefully selecting the exact stimulus that will enable pupils to learn new ideas, consolidate understanding and make learning enjoyable. In an excellent mathematics lesson, the teacher made use of a range of resources to teach and reinforce pupils' understanding of shape. This included geometric shapes of various sizes and colours; sticking a number onto one pupil's back in turn whilst the others were challenged to find clues to define the number; getting pupils to dip their hands into a drawstring bag, to feel plastic shapes and describe what they felt to the rest of the class until they could detect what the shape was; and an excellent computer programme that required pupils to fit a series of different geometric shapes together to complete a pattern.
22. Excellent teaching is characterised by excellent subject knowledge, and by great skill in communicating this knowledge to pupils in a way that captures their imagination and enthral them. This is especially evident both in the vast majority of lessons in music and in the class for Year 6 pupils. In these lessons, excellent use is made of assessment information and detailed knowledge about every pupil, so that very carefully chosen activities build systematically on pupils' existing understanding, each task stretching their capability a little further until much new ground – and vital consolidation – is covered in the time span of a single lesson. Very high expectations are combined with praise and encouragement, as in the Year 6 class where the teacher congratulates pupils on having 'a lot of clever dust' when they solve a problem correctly. This leads to a spirit of competition, where pupils seek to grasp new concepts quickly, as well as to excellent relationships based on a sense of camaraderie, so that a pupil who had answered a very challenging question offered to 'lend' some of his 'clever dust' to someone else so that they would also be successful in tackling a new and difficult task. In music, the teaching is inspirational and shows much flair. As a result, pupils love music lessons, try very hard in response to innovative tasks and invariably work extremely well. This was the case during the inspection when pupils were asked to appraise a piece of music by Mozart, which they did with considerable success. In another lesson, they contributed what seemed like random lines in the composition of a quirky new Christmas song, which then came together surprisingly well when it was performed enthusiastically by the whole class.
23. The school plans very carefully to ensure pupils make as much progress as possible in developing literacy and numeracy skills, and basic skills – together with study skills - are very well taught. The school has been very effective in implementing the National Literacy Strategy. The teaching of literacy is very good in English and there is careful attention to the development of literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum, so that pupils learn how to record their ideas and how to arrange their notes, as well as engaging in more open-ended writing tasks. Where teaching is at its best, the teaching of literacy skills is exemplary. The school has also been very effective in its

implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, and teaching of numeracy is at times exemplary both in the primary and secondary departments, with very good attention to number in mathematics and in other subjects of the curriculum. The teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) is at least good, and there is plenty of evidence of teachers' using ICT in all subjects to support pupils' learning. In the best lessons, teachers have a number of different tasks for pupils to complete on computers, matched to different levels of ability and closely linked with other class work, and some pupils in the primary department have been given the opportunity to make extensive use of e-mail to communicate with pupils in Australia as well as in this country.

**Assessment is exceptionally thorough, ensuring that work is very well matched to pupils' needs**

24. Assessment is very good with excellent features. Excellent use is made of assessment in planning both the curriculum as a whole and in determining what is to be taught in individual lessons and how it will be taught to meet the needs of different pupils. Partly as a result of this, the curriculum is rich and carefully thought out, attending to all aspects of pupils' development – intellectual, physical and spiritual.
25. The school carefully tests and assesses pupils' prior attainment and their needs when they join the school, at whatever age. Teachers' assess very thoroughly in all subjects of the curriculum and keep highly detailed records of pupils' attainment. The charts each teacher uses to record the attainment of individual members of the class make it possible to check exactly what each pupil can do within every element of any given subject, and to identify what the next step in learning should be. Pupil portfolios are a particular strength and pupils are closely involved in choosing pieces of work to represent their achievement, building up their portfolio as they move up through the school. There is useful photographic evidence of pupils' attainment, with careful notes by teachers explaining how this fits into an overall profile of a particular pupil's progress. Of high quality also are the Records of Achievement that pupils take with them when they leave school.
26. Procedures for the annual review of pupils' Statements of Special Educational Need and for transition plans are excellent. The system of reporting to parents is very effective, focusing clearly on their children's achievements and stating what they can do and what progress they have made in each subject. As pupils get older, the reports become more detailed, building systematically year on year, and include opportunities for pupils to comment about their own progress. Parents receive the reports two weeks before the annual review date and are given every opportunity to discuss them with the school and to make their own contribution to the review process.

**The high quality curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of learning opportunities**

27. The management of the curriculum is exemplary. Planning within and across subjects is excellent in a number of ways: the curriculum is very precisely planned from year to year and from key stage to key stage, ensuring that the progress pupils make in one year is built on in exactly the right way as they move on. This seamless planning contributes much to the high standards and very good achievement and to pupils' readiness for learning, making sure that they do not waste time going over work they have already grasped but are given new work that challenges them and extends what they know, understand or can do. The academic targets that are set every term are appropriately specific and very useful as a means of focusing the work of teachers and support staff,

and the review of progress against targets at the end of every module of work is a very strong feature. Planning takes account of the different abilities within the school and the setting arrangements, whereby pupils are placed in classes according to their ability and their learning needs, in Years 7 to 11 do much to support pupils' achievement.

28. Since the last inspection, the school has improved opportunities for pupils to gain qualifications. It has introduced Certificate of Achievement courses in English, mathematics, science and ICT, together with CLAIT (Computer Literacy & Information Technology), taken alongside GCSE in mathematics and the Diploma of Vocational Education. Last year, one pupil took two additional GCSEs through a mainstream school. College links prepare pupils very well for life after school: the many pupils who take up places at the local college when they leave school do so partly as a result of their familiarity with the college through attending in Years 10 and 11.
29. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is at present somewhat constrained by the amount of time given over to the Diploma of Vocational Education, with a day a week spent in college, limiting the amount of time to study in depth for other qualifications. However, the school is working concertedly to achieve the right combination of opportunities in future for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and liaising closely with college staff and with the local education authority to achieve maximum benefit from the use of the valuable college link. Rightly, staff are exploring a range of different forms of accreditation to run alongside the ASDAN (Award Scheme Development & Accreditation Network) Youth Award, which is to be introduced in place of the Diploma course, and it is intended that this will include more GCSE subjects and some short courses to give pupils qualifications in a wider range of subjects and to provide a more flexible 'package' of courses in Years 10 and 11. This is an appropriate and necessary development.
30. Provision for pupils' additional special educational needs, over and above moderate learning difficulties, is very good. There is a very strong focus on developing pupils' communication skills and there were examples during the inspection of the speech therapist being appropriately involved in pupils' learning. The very effective behaviour management enables pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties who enter the school, mainly at the age of 11 or above, to settle in and achieve very well. Pupils who would underachieve in many schools through their behavioural difficulties show a marked improvement in their behaviour, applying themselves and working hard.
31. The curriculum is enriched by close links with other schools, other agencies that provide support to pupils with special educational needs, with the community and with local businesses. There is very good collaborative work between the nursery teacher and a number of other agencies in the support and assessment of pupils under five. The integration of older pupils into mainstream schools and pupils from mainstream schools into St Anthony's is exceptionally well organised. Additionally, the school is working closely with other schools to support pupils with special educational needs in mainstream, is the regular base for meetings of special educational needs co-ordinators from primary and secondary schools, provides training for teachers from other schools, and is further developing as a special needs resource centre.
32. The community is used extensively to extend pupils' experiences and the school receives valuable support from local businesses. As a result, pupils have a wide range of opportunities open to them for work experience and the school has just gained the Quality Award for Work Experience, from the Education Business Partnership.
33. The English curriculum for pupils aged 11 to 14 is enhanced well by drama and by regular opportunities for pupils to work with and see theatre groups in school and through



visits. Pupils have a very good range of other opportunities to take part in activities beyond the classroom. All year groups have at least three visits a year and in some years, this includes a residential experience. Outdoor pursuits have been a major part of the residential experiences pupils are given in Years 7 and 10. Pupils in Year 11 took part in the Army Tigers personal development course over the last year, including map reading, survival skills and team building exercises. In Years 10 and 11, pupils visit many places in the locality and beyond as part to their Diploma of Vocational Education course, including visits to a wide range of local employers as part of their preparation for work experience. Furthermore, the curriculum is enriched by visits from a large number of visitors who speak to the pupils and raise their awareness of many aspects of life and society.

### **Pupils make very good progress in their personal development and provision for spiritual development is excellent**

34. Provision for pupils' personal development and for their moral, social and cultural development is very good and provision for their spiritual development is excellent with some exemplary practice. As a result, pupils make very good progress in their personal development.
35. Assemblies make a particularly important contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Assemblies are of high quality and a truly inspirational assembly for primary aged pupils on the theme of giving presents at Christmas was seen during the inspection. Uplifting music set the scene for a period of reflection and the teacher introduced the assembly by explaining the Latin derivation of the term 'Advent' as meaning 'waiting for the coming of Christ'. She talked about the different things Christmas means, and went into details that fascinated the pupils about the different ways of celebrating Christmas in different countries, including explanations of the origins of Santa Claus and St. Nicholas's feast day. Excellent moral and spiritual values were communicated in a way that pupils could easily understand by seeing and comparing an expensive present and card and another that had been bought cheaply and given along with a handmade card. Pupils showed curiosity and asked questions before arriving at the central message that 'love is the best present that we can give anyone'.
36. A number of subjects of the curriculum foster pupils' spiritual development as a direct result of so much of the teaching being of high quality. Teaching connects deeply with pupils and involves them at many levels of their being: this necessarily awakens them spiritually. In music, pupils sing songs with a spiritual dimension and learn to express their feeling and ideas. In art, they are encouraged to use materials experimentally and the teacher guides them to produce work that is lively and imaginative, and communicates much of their inner world. Religious education makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual development and to raising their self-esteem; pupils say prayers at the end of religious education lessons, reflecting on the content of the lesson.
37. Display around the school also contributes a great deal to pupils' spiritual and cultural development, with images that celebrate world religions, festivals and a number of different cultures. The richness of the curriculum is particularly evident in the vibrant and informative displays found in all parts of the school. The high quality display communicates clear expectations to pupils about the level of work expected and making the whole school community aware of the success of pupils of all ages. Especially striking are the displays produced as a result of topics spanning a number of subjects. In the secondary corridor, there are some excellent written accounts of travel in space, by train and of flight and there is an outstanding display on the theme of 'Egypt' in one of the primary classrooms.

38. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and their very good behaviour does much to support their achievement. They say that they love school and it is clear that they have very good relationships with their teachers, as well as with one another. They are polite, friendly and eager to please. Most are quick to follow instructions, very co-operative and respectful to others. Teachers are very effective role models for pupils and take every opportunity to raise pupils' awareness, pointing out the consequences of any inappropriate behaviour. As a result, most pupils show a growing recognition that, for example, being over-zealous and calling out may well mean that they will not be asked to answer the question. Thus, pupils gain in self-control and the knowledge that behaving well is not only desirable but a requirement is evident in all situations where pupils come together in large numbers, as in assemblies, lunchtimes and break. On the rare occasions when an individual or group of pupils behave inappropriately, they are quick to comply when spoken to either by the teacher or a senior manager and then sustain good behaviour once they have received a reminder.
39. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons make a very good contribution to pupils' development: the course is very carefully targeted at pupils' needs and makes good use of visiting speakers. As well as within discrete PSHE lessons, teachers encourage pupils to think about issues and to express their views. Pupils' spoken language is at times sophisticated, showing that they are thoughtful and confident to share their perceptions. They are growing into confident young people, many of whom want to be helpful and to make a contribution. Pupils encourage one another to maintain high standards and this does much to lift any occasional slippage of effort by individuals, as well as celebrating one another's achievements. Pupils have, to a great extent, taken on for themselves the expectations that teachers communicate to them. This is evident not only in the classroom but around the school, for example, at the beginning of the school day when pupils play together and talk in the playground but all immediately stand still at the sound of the bell, get into orderly lines and file into class, removing their outdoor clothes without any delay and taking up their seats ready for the day's learning.
40. The school promotes pupils' independence, so that pupils in Years 10 and 11 are expected to make their own way to college, and Year 11 pupils had just completed very successful work experience placements, some being offered part-time jobs as a result. Senior pupils choose representatives for the school council and pupils of all ages help to serve the food at lunchtime. Pupils are responsible for serving the food at their table, and they are also responsible for keeping their table clean and for clearing away at the end of the meal. Pupils behave very well and act responsibly, demonstrating very positive attitudes to one another and taking part in what amounts to a very pleasant family atmosphere. Morning breaks contribute well to pupils' social development and pupils interact very well with one another, joining in friendship groups, linking arms and helping one another.

### **The school provides a high level of care and support to its pupils**

41. The school's attention to pupils' welfare and the support that it provides enables pupils to flourish personally and academically.
42. The health and welfare officer is a key figure in the excellent support the school provides to pupils, and in the support the school extends to parents who have particular concerns of their own. She spends a lot of time talking to parents about their children's personal development, and is readily available either to communicate by telephone or in person with anxious parents. Where parents are having difficulties with their children at home, she provides advice and puts them in touch with support services, where they need

further assistance. For pupils, she acts as a 'friend and confidante' if they are distressed or upset, as well as attending to their physical needs if they are feeling ill. All pupils interviewed during the inspection said that they would feel confident in turning to a member of staff if they had problems and they said that any difficulties are quickly resolved so that they feel safe and secure in school.

43. The school pays careful attention to the health and safety of its pupils and the system for child protection is excellent. All staff are regularly trained to ensure they are fully up-to-date in their knowledge of the best procedures to follow, and the school is highly sensitive and effective in its handling of any situations where a child might be at risk.
44. The school's systems for recording, monitoring and following up any concerns about all aspects of pupils' performance are very thorough and effective. This is the case with regard to pupils' attendance and to the wealth of assessment information that is kept on each pupil, enabling staff to keep a close check on pupils' academic and personal progress.
45. The management of pupils' behaviour is extremely effective, and the school makes very good use of both rewards and sanctions. Pupils respect these systems and know what to expect because teachers and support staff are very consistent in implementing the school's behaviour policy. Teachers receive strong support from senior managers and the headteacher has a high profile at those times when pupils come together in large numbers, often playing basketball with the older boys at morning break and overseeing pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes. As a result, pupils' behaviour on all these occasions was excellent during the inspection and the atmosphere was both calm and relaxed.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Communication with parents could be improved, and the setting of homework needs to be more tightly organised with clearer expectations**

46. The vast majority of parents believe, rightly, that their children are making very good progress and that standards are high. The school works hard to try to build a positive relationship with parents, to support them and to inform them about the progress that their children are making. Some aspects of the school's communication with parents are very good, particularly the detailed reports that parents receive prior to the Annual Review of their children's Statement of Special Educational Needs, the opportunity they are given to have their views considered, and the way they are invited each term to contribute to the setting of individual education plan targets for their children. All these features provide parents with very good opportunities to contribute to the planning of their children's education, enabling them to raise concerns and ensuring that they are well informed about how well their children are progressing. Furthermore, the health and welfare officer provides excellent support 'behind the scenes' to those parents who ask for it, and parents of children in the nursery are kept very well informed by direct contact with the teacher, through regular newsletters and on a daily basis via the home-school diary.
47. Despite these very good practices, a significant minority of parents are clearly dissatisfied with the way the school operates and the impact they believe it is having on their children. The majority of criticisms aired by parents are not confirmed by inspection findings. Indeed, many of the negative views expressed by parents in the questionnaire, in accompanying letters and at the parents' meeting are completely at odds with the findings of the inspection.

48. Since so much of what happens in the school is very good and there are many examples of excellence, it is unfortunate that some parents are not fully aware of the overall quality of education their children are receiving, notwithstanding some individual concerns about issues specific to their children. Some aspects of provision that cause parents concern are beyond the school's direct control, being dependent on decisions of the local authority or central government. A number of others do not reflect the true situation in the school. There are, however, some areas where the school could do more to inform and involve parents. What is clear is that there is scope for a closer partnership between the school and parents, so that all parents are sufficiently informed about school life and in a position to recognise the school's many strengths.
49. A newsletter is issued twice a year but parents do not receive regular information about topics their children are studying or enough detail about what is going on in school. Neither do they automatically receive an annual prospectus giving up-to-date information about the school. They are issued with a prospectus when their child enrolls at the school and then given yearly updates containing essential information such as key dates in the school year, and test and examination results. The changing face of the school, as communicated via the prospectus, is therefore not made available to them – unless they ask for a full prospectus each year - and some important details and developments may pass them by, leaving them feeling as if they are not properly informed. Several letters are sent to parents each year concerning particular events or activities in which their children are involved but these letters are not numbered, so it would be easy for a parent to miss a letter without realising it. Some parents of pupils aged 11 to 16 said that their children have forgotten to deliver letters concerning outings or other events.
50. The other aspect of the school with which a substantial proportion of parents are unhappy is the setting of homework. Parents express the view that their children should be given more homework, and do not feel the current arrangement - whereby parents may ask for work to be sent home - is sufficient. Inspection findings show that the arrangement for setting homework is not tight enough. There is particular concern amongst some parents that older pupils are not being prepared effectively for studying more independently when they leave school and go on to college courses, and the lack of homework again leaves many parents feeling out of touch with what is happening at school. Overall, the link with the college is most effective in preparing pupils for transition to college when they leave school but the setting of more homework for those pupils who are able to undertake some work unsupported would better prepare them for further independent study.
51. Some parents do work with their children at home and the school has provided guidance to parents about how to support their children with homework. It has adopted its policy of setting homework in response to parental requests largely because it found that a number of textbooks and other materials were taken home and never returned, but there is a need to improve on current arrangements. In order to raise standards still further and especially to support the development of coursework for pupils in Years 10 and 11, the regular completion of homework needs to become an expectation rather than an option. This requires a tightening up of expectations for pupils, parents and teachers, including ensuring that when homework is completed it is effectively marked, making clear to pupils how well they did and what they could do to improve.

### **Aspects of accommodation are unsatisfactory and impact on the quality of education**

52. There has been an extensive programme of building improvements since the last inspection, with the addition of seven new classrooms (replacing seven mobile classrooms), a library / resources room and a suite of five offices. Art and science have

benefited from these developments but the accommodation is still unsatisfactory in a number of areas. The school has drawn up plans for a sports hall, a music room, a new nursery and is aware of the need to reburish some very out-of-date toilet and shower facilities. So far, it has been unsuccessful in seeking funding to enable these further necessary improvements to be made.

53. The one school hall, which is used as a dining room, assembly hall, and as a classroom when more than one class is taught together, is inadequate when used for indoor physical education activities. It is, anyway, a thoroughfare – being the meeting point of a number of corridors – and is too small to meet the needs of pupils over the age of 11 for sporting activities. The school attempts to overcome this by taking older pupils to a local sports centre once a week but this is not an effective long-term solution and the development of physical skills, particularly dance, gymnastics and techniques required in some organised ball games, is restricted through the lack of a proper sports hall.
54. The accommodation used for the nursery is unsatisfactory since it is not easily adapted to the needs of under-fives and raises particular concerns about health and hygiene. The toileting area is not only open to the rest of the classroom, but offers no means of ventilation. Pupils sit round the table only a few feet from where other children have just used the toilet and where toileting has to be carried out.
55. Music is a particular strength of the school and pupils are taught not only in their class groups but also come together on occasion, for instance during the inspection some of the primary classes joined to practise singing carols. Whether music is taught in the music specialist's classroom or in the school hall, sound from music lessons carries through the school and causes disturbance to other lessons. This is especially the case in science, where the science laboratory is situated next to the classroom most often used for music teaching.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

**In order to build on the school's many strengths and existing excellent practice, the headteacher, governors and senior managers should:**

- I. Improve the school's partnership with parents by:
  - strengthening communication with parents so that they are better informed about the life and achievements of the school;
  - increasing the amount of homework that is set, suitably matching the amount and nature of work set to the age and ability of pupils;
  - making sure that parents, pupils and staff are clear that the completion of homework is an expectation rather than an option;
  - ensuring that completed homework is appropriately marked so that it informs pupils of how well they have done and what they might do to improve.
- II. Continue to work for improved accommodation in those areas where the accommodation is currently unsatisfactory\*.

*\* The school recognises the need to improve the accommodation in those areas identified in this report, but has not yet been successful in gaining funding to finance further improvement.*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
20	46	32	2	0	0	0

*The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Number of pupils on the school's roll	175
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	64

FTE means full-time equivalent.

<b>Special educational needs</b>	<b>Nursery</b>	<b>Y1 – Y11</b>
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3	161
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	14	161

<b>English as an additional language</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	-

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

## **Attendance**

### **Authorised absence**

	<b>%</b>
School data	6.2
National comparative data	8.0

### **Unauthorised absence**

	<b>%</b>
School data	2.6
National comparative data	2.6

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

## **Ethnic background of pupils**

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	-
Black – other	4
Indian	-
Pakistani	-
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
White	157
Any other minority ethnic group	-

## **Exclusions in the last school year**

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	-	-
Black – African heritage	-	-
Black – other	-	-
Indian	-	-
Pakistani	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	-
White	20	1
Other minority ethnic groups	-	-

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

## **Teachers and classes**

## **Financial information**

**Qualified teachers and classes: YN -Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	10.1
Average class size	12

**Education support staff: YN – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	329

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	868435
Total expenditure	869806
Expenditure per pupil	5117
Balance brought forward from previous year	-
Balance carried forward to next year	-1371



## **Results of the survey of parents and carer**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	175
Number of questionnaires returned	81

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	63	32	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	34	5	6	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	38	4	4	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	30	24	12	10
The teaching is good.	65	24	1	2	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	26	11	7	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	24	5	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	33	1	2	6
The school works closely with parents.	52	27	12	6	2
The school is well led and managed.	66	20	2	2	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	37	4	5	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	26	11	9	26