



Anthony Gell School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112968
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279067
Inspection dates 1 March 2006 to 2 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Clive Kempton LI

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

Type of school	Secondary	School address	Wood Street
School category	Community		DE4 4DX
Age range of pupils	11 to 18		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01629825577
Number on roll	691	Fax number	01629824864
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. Ian Forrest
Date of previous inspection	8 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr. David Baker

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Anthony Gell is a small, rural comprehensive school. Around half the students live in the local town with the other half travelling from the surrounding villages. A significant number travel from outside the catchment area to attend the school due to its reputation. The school became a Specialist Sports College in 2001 and enjoys excellent on-site sports facilities, which are open and available for public use outside school hours. There is also a youth club and adult education facility.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Anthony Gell is an effective, inclusive school with a high profile in the local community, a view justifiably shared by parents and reflected in the overall school self-evaluation. Pupils achieve above average standards in the main school and average standards in the sixth form, although boys do not make as much progress as girls in Key Stage 4. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. The school has met its Specialist School Targets. The personal development of students, their attendance, and the care, guidance and support they receive are good. The curriculum and extra-curricular activities are also good and very responsive to the needs of the students. The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school, although there is wide variation in the success that some teachers have in raising the attainment of boys at Key Stage 4. The quality of leadership and management across the school is satisfactory. Whilst the school has made only satisfactory improvement with the issues raised at the last inspection it now has a good capacity to improve with the appointment of the new headteacher. He is aware of the strengths of the school, such as the positive teacher-pupil relationships and the outstanding quality of the wide range of external partners that the school works with to support students. He is also aware of the areas that require further development, such as the lack of clarity in strategic planning and the monitoring of teaching. The Specialist Sports College status has made a significant impact on standards of attainment in PE and has considerably enhanced provision and participation within the community. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The school correctly evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form as good. Students of all abilities are admitted to the sixth form and make good progress to reach average standards on advanced courses. Students at all levels of ability achieve very well. Teaching is good, and students enjoy learning. They have very responsible attitudes to younger members of the school and contribute maturely and actively to benefit the school community. The school provides students with a good range of advanced courses. Few other courses are available, but every effort is made to provide for students' vocational interests. Care and guidance in choosing careers and higher educational opportunities are good. Mentoring support is effective in enabling students to manage their courses well. Last year, only a very small minority of Year 12 students did not complete their courses successfully. The leadership and management of the sixth form are good and enable students to achieve well. Some sixth form accommodation is of poor quality.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the standards of attainment of Key Stage 4 boys by disseminating the good practice within the physical education aspect of the Specialist Sports College. - Develop a management structure that will deliver a sharply focused strategic plan to address

and monitor identified key issues. - Develop a programme for monitoring teaching that ensures consistent quality.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Achievement overall is satisfactory. Girls achieve very well throughout the main school but boys do not do as well in Key Stage 4 in many subjects. The school meets its targets, including those that relate to its specialist school status for sport, in which all students achieve very well. Achievement in the sixth form is good. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with standards close to the national average but literacy skills, especially of boys, are weak. Girls and boys make good progress in Key Stage 3 and reach above average standards in the Year 9 National Curriculum tests. Standards are above average in mathematics and science, and average in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress throughout the school due to the high quality of the individual support they receive. In Key Stage 4 boys and girls overall reach above average standards in GCSE examinations in attaining five or more A* to C and A* to G grades. Everyone gains at least one GCSE grade but, boys' progress slows from the good rate they achieve in Key Stage 3. This is being addressed through the pupil mentoring programme. Students enter the sixth form with standards generally below those typically found nationally at the start of advanced courses. Students of all abilities are admitted to the sixth form. They make good progress and reached average standards on advanced courses in 2004 and 2005. The very large majority pass A-level examinations, but a below average percentage gain A or B grades. Results of advanced vocational courses are above average, including at grades A and B. Pupils and sixth form students achieve very well in sport, the school's specialism. For example, in GCSE physical education examinations, both boys' and girls' results were above average in 2005, especially at grades A* and A. A similar profile of results applies to sixth form examinations in sport.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Students are proud of their school. They recognise that it is a safe and happy place for learning and that it offers many experiences which prepare them for work and leisure in adult life. This was well articulated by members of the School Council. They provide an effective student voice to decision making in the school although, at present, boys are under represented in this group. Student attendance and punctuality are good. Students behave well in lessons, the majority respond positively to their teachers and working co-operatively with peers. They act sensibly around the school premises. They are attentive to visiting speakers and conduct themselves responsibly on school outings. Students participate well in the rich variety of activities offered, particularly in sports clubs, with some taking responsibility to lead and support others. This is especially true of the sixth

form enrichment programme where students are involved in sports coaching, subject mentoring, and Young Enterprise schemes amongst others. The vertical tutor group system helps new entrants to settle into the school and to forge relationships with older members. Students report that they feel able to go to their designated tutor and to other adults to discuss personal problems, for example bullying. They have confidence that they will be listened to and helped, and that appropriate action will be taken. There is a comprehensive programme for citizenship, personal, social and health education and religious education across the school which students take seriously and evaluate positively. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The focus on physical exercise provided by the Sports College encourages a positive attitude to healthy living, although there is more work to be done on the promotion of healthy eating for all students. There are very strong community links for charity work, joint participation in sport and cultural activities, and for careers guidance and work experience.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall in the main school and the sixth form, although there is variation, with occasional examples of teaching that is only satisfactory. Students generally show positive attitudes to learning and settle quickly to work. They show respect towards their teachers and get on well with other students. In the better lessons, they make good progress where the teachers have planned carefully and where the objectives of the lesson are clear and specific to pupils. They respond very enthusiastically to activities which challenge them and to problem solving opportunities which enable fast progress in their learning. They appreciate the increased availability of computer based learning because it enables them to learn for themselves. Teaching staff are aware of the issue of Key Stage 4 boys' progress and some good imaginative teaching initiatives are developing such as pupil mentoring. In the less successful lessons by contrast, although teachers know their subjects well and provide interesting and appropriate resources, the pace of learning is too slow. The work does not match the learning needs of all the students. Students are motivated by careful marking of their books but not all teachers tell them how to improve their work or challenge its presentation. Students who find work difficult are supported by appropriately trained teaching assistants and make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good throughout the school. It has been well planned and is inclusive, with the individual learning needs of all pupils at the forefront of all development. There has been good progress since the last inspection with the addition of design technology to the Key Stage 3 curriculum. The use of information and communication technology has been extended to all subjects. Music, art and drama continue to be

taught separately to ensure the broader education of pupils. Specialist sports status is extending the provision for physical education and sports related courses and making a significant impact on the progress of students both in lessons and after school activities. Here, unlike some of the other areas of the curriculum, Key Stage 4 boys do manage to make good progress due to the practical nature of the curriculum, the sense of purpose of all the activities, high quality teaching, and excellent links to sporting opportunities and clubs out of school. Plans to widen the impact of sports status to other subjects are in the early stages. At Key Stage 4, there are a wide range and diversity of courses at different levels, providing individual pathways, which ensure the learning needs and aspirations of all pupils are met and which promote achievement. These have been possible because of the strong and effective links with neighbouring schools and colleges which have enabled the introduction of more vocational courses. Students are very well prepared for their future with generous provision of work experience and work related activities. Careers education is good. The enterprise initiatives at Key Stage 4 and post 16 are an outstanding example of the opportunities for personal development and an illustration of the grouping of students to maximize their achievement. There is a very high take-up of the wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits which enhance students' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support of all students are good. The school takes its duty of care seriously with all health and safety procedures implemented and reviewed regularly. Effective and regular liaison with outside agencies ensures good support of students who may be at risk. Any issues of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. Parents praise the regular communication between them and the school which includes detailed reporting of their child's progress. The school uses data well to set targets for students. Since the last inspection the appointment of Key Stage 3 and 14-19 co-ordinators has enabled a tighter structure to the mentoring of students' work and progress with more challenging targets being set. Not all pupils know their levels in each subject in the main school. Those that do, say that knowing the level they are working at and reaching their targets gives them a sense of achievement and makes them want to learn more. There is a strong team of staff supporting students who have learning difficulties and disabilities, with prompt identification and a programme which is tailored to their individual needs. This results in lower ability students generally making good progress. Similarly, well thought out and stimulating activities enable gifted and talented students to broaden their learning experiences and develop new skills. Students say that arrangements for them when joining the school and at key stage transition points are very helpful and individualised.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The overall quality of leadership and management across the school is satisfactory, although there are some aspects that are good and even outstanding, such as the leadership and management of the Sports College initiative. Here, not only are standards in PE impressive, but students are provided with a wealth of opportunities within the curriculum, at lunchtimes, after school and at weekends that develop their sporting and personal leadership skills. There is a built-in natural progression to local sports clubs within the community, and a number of international sports personalities attended Anthony Gell school. The full senior management team has yet to be formed. The appointment of the headteacher in January 2006 has created a good opportunity to develop a new management structure in the near future. This should refocus the strategic direction of the school and clarify roles, responsibilities and accountability which are currently too vague. Development planning in many curriculum areas lacks clarity and measurable outcomes, and the whole-school processes for monitoring the quality of teaching are not sufficiently robust. The new headteacher leads the school well, has identified the strengths and areas for development and has the capacity to implement change. Managers at all levels have made a good start to the process of self-evaluation, although their judgements in some key areas are generous and not sufficiently evaluative to effect improvement. For example, the issue of boys' underachievement has been acknowledged for a number of years, but insufficient progress has been made in raising their attainment across the school. Communication systems with parents are regular and informative through a termly newsletter, and half-termly letter from the headteacher. The annual calendar of events is particularly appreciated. Parents' response to consultation has impacted on school development such as the dropping of national catch-up tests due to the impact on their child's self-esteem, and the re-decoration of the outside of the school. Parents are very supportive of the school and speak highly of the individualised help their children receive. The school works with a wide range of external agencies who all hold the school in very high esteem. Such collaborations are to the benefit of both parties. For example a group of Key Stage 4 pupils are currently engaged with the Local Quarry Association to devise a set of Quarry Safety materials to disseminate nationally that will inform young people of the dangers of playing in quarry areas. Governance is good. The school with its voluntary controlled status, has two sets of governors who work well together and support the school extensively. Their away-days allow a focused time for discussion and challenge. They too, are eager to develop a new-style management system to take the school forward into the next stage of its development. The governors are aware that they still do not fully meet the statutory requirements for the daily act of collective worship reported at the last inspection in 1999. Finances are very effectively managed by the bursar who has a firm grip on the wide range of funding streams. Building developments and internal refurbishments have been extensive since the last inspection, but there remain aspects of the external fabric of the school that are in need of urgent repair.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I wanted to write to say how much the inspection team enjoyed visiting your school and the warm and courteous welcome you gave us. We enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work and being part of an exciting week at Anthony Gell. I thought you would like to know the outcome of the inspection and how the inspection team felt your school could improve further.

- Your teachers work hard for you and prepare stimulating, challenging work. They find lots of organisations outside school to extend your learning.
- You get on well with your teachers and other adults who help you in school, and they are very concerned for your welfare.
- The Sports College Status has provided you with a wide range of sporting activities that many of you take up in and out of school. Many of you are also getting involved in sports leadership courses.
- Many of you take on leadership roles with some of the younger students. This helps you to develop different skills.
- A lot of you take the opportunity to get involved in clubs out of school time.
- You behaved well in and around the school and were a credit to the school. To get even better, we have asked your Headteacher and senior staff to make sure that the following things happen:

- Make sure that all boys understand the need to achieve higher standards.
- Devise a long term plan that maps out what has to be done to make the school even better and who has got to do it.
- Ensure that all your lessons are equally challenging and enjoyable.