

St Anthony's School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126155
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	340927
Inspection dates	26–27 May 2010
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Shippam
Headteacher	Robert Griffin
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Eighteen lessons and 12 different teachers were observed. Discussions were held with the headteacher, the three assistant headteachers, teaching and support staff, governors, parents and carers and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, provision for those pupils having special needs or learning difficulties, and minutes of governors' meetings. In addition, 67 questionnaires from parents and carers, 46 staff questionnaires and 98 pupil questionnaires were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of the school's assessment and tracking procedures and how well they are used in planning for individual pupils' needs
- the impact of the school's provision on pupils' personal development through guidance and support and its safeguarding procedures
- how curriculum and additional activities meet individual needs and contribute to the development of workplace and other skills
- in the light of the federation, how successfully the leaders and managers at all levels are enabling continuity and improvement.

Information about the school

St Anthony's School is an above average size maintained special school and Specialist School Special Educational Needs (Communication and Interaction). The school has a large catchment area and over 90% of pupils are transported to school. The majority of pupils have complex needs. In 2000, the school opened a department for primary-aged pupils with autism to focus on their specific needs. This now has five class bases across the school, including exceptional needs provision in the secondary department.

Currently, the school meets the needs of 30% of pupils with autistic spectrum diagnosis and over 80% of pupils have speech and language and communication difficulties. The school also caters for pupils who have a wide range of additional complex needs including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), dyspraxia, and medical needs.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is around the national average.

The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a separate Reception class.

The school is part of a federation with three other local schools □ a hard federation with Littlegreen Special School and soft federation with two other schools.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

St Anthony's School provides an outstanding education for all of its pupils, whatever their specific need might be. The outstanding range of equipment and facilities create a beautifully maintained and welcoming environment. Pupils' work is everywhere to be seen. Staff take great pride in the displays that are around the school which praise and encourage pupils for their many achievements. The joy that all pupils express shows that they in turn are proud of their school. Thanks to the individual care they receive they all work very hard and progress outstandingly well. The overwhelming majority of parents are right in their judgement that this is an excellent school. One spoke on behalf of almost all by writing succinctly, 'Our son could not be at a better school.'

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors provide highly effective leadership. They know the school's strengths very well and what needs to be refined further. The school's view of itself is accurate and its federation with another school has enabled it to move forward rapidly and has created an atmosphere where all are focused relentlessly on improvement. As a result, the school has an excellent capacity to continue improving.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to an excellent start and make outstanding progress. Throughout the school, pupils make exceptional progress as a result of the exemplary care, guidance and support that they receive, which parents comment is extended to the family as a whole. Pupils benefit greatly from a wide range of therapeutic and medical strategies to meet their additional needs, from physiotherapy sessions, to support from speech and language specialists. The secondary department's increasing focus on promoting access to the next stage of education at college or in training works well.

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The school does much to promote its place in the local community and works extremely effectively with many local organisations and local businesses. The contribution of the Friends of the School Association is exceptional, and is greatly appreciated by all involved. The audit of community cohesion, undertaken by the outstanding governing body, is underpinned by a careful analysis of these factors in the school's context. While links with the local, and global, communities are excellent, pupils' awareness of, and preparation for, living and working in a culturally diverse United Kingdom are not developed as well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance pupils' understanding of their place in a culturally diverse United Kingdom and extend the school's provision for community cohesion by:
 - instigating the findings of its recent analysis of the school's context
 - implementing its plans to link with schools in other localities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Observations of lessons during the inspection confirmed that, throughout the school, all groups of pupils make excellent progress. It was impressive to observe, in all lessons, impeccable behaviour and the excellent skills pupils acquire in working independently or with their classmates. This helps to create the high quality climate for learning that was evident in all classes. The outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classes is firmly based on meeting individual pupils' needs and sharing best practice. This is built on exceptionally well in the older classes. By ensuring excellent support from very well qualified teaching assistants wherever it is needed, every pupil is enabled to make excellent progress.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent. The pupils make excellent progress with their life skills as the outstanding curriculum provides an extensive range of opportunities to develop them, for example through off-site visits and visitors to school. Pupils respond extremely well to encouragement to maintain a healthy lifestyle in relation to diet, exercise and emotional development. They maintain a high level of self-esteem and dignity due to the excellent relationships they have with adults and the sensitive way in which their needs are met, as when specific care or medical support are provided.

The strength of the relationships pupils develop was demonstrated admirably in an assembly taken by an outside group. The focus was on making the most of all opportunities, and all pupils responded to each other and the visitors admirably. Such experiences make a significant contribution to pupils' excellent standards in speaking and listening, their high self-esteem and overall very impressive personal development.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Pupils' attainment on entry to both primary and secondary departments is very low compared with other learners of the same age because of their special educational and complex needs. Teaching and learning are outstanding. In all lessons observed, there were strong elements that help pupils of all abilities to make excellent progress.

Teachers are a keen and enthusiastic team who use a range of techniques to make lessons enjoyable based on careful assessments. The way a teacher, in a Year 8 lesson, was able to use a keyboard and improvise on a blues scale to keep pupils' interest high was outstanding. The fact that all the tuned percussion had been prepared with red stickers on the □blues' notes ensured the pupils would play in harmony and enjoy making their music.

The teachers consistently show excellent skills in managing their pupils and in providing

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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clear explanations about new ideas. In all lessons observed, pupils were extremely well motivated by the ideas and resources presented and were very keen to please their teachers and other adults. A drama lesson in Year 10 was typical of most, and outstanding from the first moment, as the teacher engaged the pupils in their warm up to raise their energy levels and develop their collaborative skills. The resulting excellent group performances were videoed for the pupils to review in their next lesson.

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Guidance for pupils' academic support is exceptionally strong. The detailed tracking of their progress ensures that all particular requirements for each pupil are identified and made available. The challenging targets reflect the staff's high expectations of pupils' progress. The careful planning and focus on pupils' targets are implemented with enthusiasm and care. The targets prepared relate both to National Curriculum requirements and pupils' own specific needs. It was clear that all pupils fully understood and shared their targets. Parents are also aware of these targets and as one wrote, My child has been at this school since September. His improvement in behaviour, speech, reading and writing has been fantastic. This is a very special school where my "special" child has started to develop a love for learning.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, drive and ambition to sustain an excellent capacity to improve. This, in partnership with the very effective assistant headteachers, ensures that complacency is not tolerated. Teamwork is excellent and everyone, including the administrative team and caretaking staff, are considerable assets to the school and are very much appreciated by all concerned. Staff are focused relentlessly on further improvement and work brilliantly together. As one staff member wrote, reflecting the views of all, I thoroughly enjoy working at St Anthony's School and feel very valued as a member of staff.'

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The school knows itself very well and sets the right targets to become even better. Documentation is impressive and the evaluation of the school's work is honest and accurate. The outstanding governing body is fully involved in this process, challenging decisions and requesting explanations where necessary. It holds the school to account in a challenging but supportive manner. Its focus through the federation has enabled the school to thrive in all directions.

Excellent attention is paid by managers at all levels to ensure the highest quality of safety and care for the pupils. There are, for example, excellent procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils through the checks made on all adults who work in the school. Pupils' safety and well-being are paramount at all times, ensuring that the school is a very safe and supportive place to be. The senior managers, supported well by all staff, are effective in promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination for all pupils across all aspects of the school's work, demonstrated by their action to reduce any gender differences in attainment. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is good. A plan and clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding from a local and global perspective. The school is in the process of implementing its plans for greater national links that will raise this aspect of community cohesion to the outstanding level of the rest of its provision.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make an excellent start to their education in the Reception class. The huge level of commitment and care shown by the class teacher and all the staff is evident in the way that all children settle into the school so well, and enjoy every moment they are

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there. Home visits and many meetings enable the staff, children and their families to get to know each other and help make sure that starting at St Anthony's is a happy event. These visits lead to the full involvement of parents and carers that continues right through the school.

Staff know the children very well and they ensure that they all receive provision that is appropriate to their needs and, therefore, they all progress exceptionally well. All children are given every chance to determine their own way forward, which guarantees their full involvement in all activities. The way that children could decide on what they wanted to do, get out the required equipment, and get on with their task was excellent. The fact that time was always taken so they could say why they had made their choices was inspiring.

Children make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well, especially in communication skills, and in their personal, social and emotional development. Adults have high expectations, provide very clear routines and enable children to build strong, positive relationships. At all times, the class teachers engage and stimulate the children. The way the children built their towers, helped others with their paintings, or chose how many times to answer a question were particularly impressive. The classroom and role-play room are stimulating and resources are used exceptionally well as children move from one activity to another. The outside area, although quite small, provides the same exciting level of challenge and stimulation, especially for the more mobile children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A large number of parents and carers returned the questionnaire and the overwhelming majority, in addition to those who spoke to the inspection team, are extremely happy with the school. They consider that the school has a dedicated team of staff and the headteacher leads and manages it exceptionally well. They agree that the school has a very warm, supportive and friendly atmosphere and that their children make outstanding progress. Inspectors fully endorse these views. A very small number of parental criticisms were offered constructively, and were discussed with the headteacher. There were no particular patterns in the very few negative comments received by inspectors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Anthony's School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 67 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 202 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	76	15	22	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	88	8	12	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	46	69	20	30	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	72	18	27	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	56	84	10	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	72	17	25	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	73	16	24	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	41	61	16	24	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	57	85	10	15	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	70	17	25	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	72	16	24	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	55	82	12	18	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	87	9	13	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anthony's School, Chichester, PO19 5PA

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we came to the school recently. We did enjoy our visit. Yours is an outstanding school with many strengths, and we agree with what you told us it is a really great place to learn. Here is a list of some of the things that we think are really good.

- The school looks after you very carefully and you all achieve extremely well by the time you leave the school.
- You behave excellently, get along with each other and feel very safe in school.
- You behave excellently, get along with each other and feel very safe in school.
- You find lessons interesting and really enjoy school.
- There are plenty of exciting things for you to do, in school, on visits and in clubs.
- The headteacher and staff manage the school extremely well.

Even in excellent schools, some things can be made better. I have asked the teachers to make sure that:

- you are given the chance to look at and understand about how children and adults live in places in the United Kingdom that are different from where you live.

You must continue to listen carefully and take note of what the teachers say. Then you will all continue to make excellent progress in your learning.

Finally, we would like to thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

David Marshall

Lead inspector

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