

The St Anne's College Grammar School

Independent school standard inspection report

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.^{1, 2}

Information about the school

The St Anne's College Grammar School is registered as an independent day and boarding school which provides full-time education for up to 151 girls and boys aged from three to 19 years. There are currently 48 pupils on roll. No pupils are boarders and the boarding provision was not inspected. Six pupils are from overseas and reside with families in the local area. There are ten pupils with a statement of special educational needs. Four children are eligible for funding under the government's Nursery scheme. Originally established in 1886, the school moved to its current premises in 1902. It is situated in a large purpose built house amongst spacious grounds. The school also makes use of the gardens of two adjacent houses. These houses were formerly used for boarding pupils. The school was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2009.

Currently, the school is organised into a Nursery, a combined Reception and Year 1 class, and a class for pupils in Years 3 to 6. These classes make up the junior school. The senior school comprises separately taught Year 7 to Year 11 groups. Additionally, there is a sixth form which currently has two pupils. There is a headteacher for the junior school and a headteacher for the senior school. This husband and wife team are also the school's proprietors.

The school aims include, 'to provide a stimulating and happy environment where children will want to learn,' and, 'to identify individual talent in whatever direction it lies and to nurture its full development.'

Evaluation of the school

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils and meets its aims. The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Due to a good curriculum and good teaching pupils make good progress. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their behaviour are good. The provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the outdoor provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage, implemented a scheme of work in the senior school for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) and has introduced a whole-school tracking system to record pupils' attainment. The school now meets all the regulations for continued registration as an independent school. Arrangements for safeguarding meet all the requirements.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

Quality of education

The curriculum and other activities are good in meeting the range of needs and interests of pupils. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided with a full range of experiences across all the areas of learning and development. There are good resources both in the classrooms and outdoors including large toys and equipment which help children to develop their physical skills. The teaching of letters and sounds is given a high priority and children make good progress. In the junior school the full National Curriculum is provided. English lessons include poetry, drama and specific skills such as handwriting and spelling. Physical education (PE) provides opportunities in gymnastics, dance, swimming and outdoor games. Music tuition is widely available. French is taught to all pupils. Themes are planned to ensure that pupils learn skills in subjects such as history, geography and science in a meaningful way.

In the senior school, pupils in Key Stage 3 access a curriculum designed mainly on the National Curriculum. Subjects studied include English, mathematics, geography, history, French, German, Spanish, physics, chemistry, biology, art, music, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. Also, there is a regular programme for pupils' PSHE together with religious education in assemblies. Pupils can opt for additional languages including Mandarin, Russian and Arabic. In Key Stage 4 the curriculum is individually tailored to pupils' needs and interests. As a result, all pupils study English, mathematics and sciences and add to these a small number of other courses. In the sixth form pupils choose from a fairly narrow range of subjects including English, mathematics and the sciences. Overall, the senior school curriculum provides a good, broad and balanced range of traditional subjects but there are limitations to the range of choices pupils may make in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Consequently, pupils are generally entered for six or seven GCSE's and some complete A/S and A levels.

The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra activities. For example, pupils enjoy an activity week during which they can take part in outdoor events such as shooting, canoeing and abseiling. The school provides occasional visits overseas and previous trips have been made to a French chateau and to a ski resort. Good use is made of the local area to enhance provision for physical, environmental and art education such as by using the local swimming pool, the beach dunes and trips to Blackpool illuminations. Activities at lunchtime widen pupils' experiences through involvement in clubs such as chess and public speaking.

The effectiveness of teaching and assessment are good in meeting the full range of pupils' needs. During the inspection most teaching was good with a small proportion judged outstanding or satisfactory. The good teaching is consistent throughout the different groups and classes of pupils. Pupils say that lessons are good and they speak highly of the close attention they get from teachers which helps them make good progress.

Teaching is characterised by traditional approaches to learning and very good relationships between staff and pupils. The small classes and groups lead to teachers developing an excellent knowledge of each individual pupil. In this way, teachers respond quickly and effectively to pupils' learning needs, providing personalised support and tuition. This greatly benefits pupils' personal development and their academic progress.

Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive a curriculum which fully meets their requirements. The school successfully helps pupils, for whom there has often been a long pattern of absence from education, to quickly improve their attitudes to learning and their attendance. Teaching for these pupils is equally good and effectively combines specialist one to one skills sessions with additional support in whole class lessons. As a result, pupils make sustained good progress and make up for lost ground quickly.

In most lessons teachers are well prepared, show good subject knowledge, organise interesting tasks and provide very good individual support. In an outstanding lesson seen by inspectors the teacher captivated the children by sounding out animal noises such as 'baa' and 'quack' when teaching letters and sounds. Good use of pictures further enhanced the children's experience and brought learning to life. Early reading skills were systematically taught such as words ending in 'ck.' The satisfactory lessons are typified by teachers who talk for too long or consolidate prior learning too much and, as a result, pupils are not introduced to the main learning intentions quickly enough.

In lessons, teachers regularly assess pupils' progress through effective questioning. They then move learning on when pupils show understanding and a secure acquisition of new skills. For example, in a PE lesson pupils learned how to develop a looping attacking forehand in table tennis. The teacher provided good demonstration and involved the pupils. They were set a quick task which the teacher observed and then refined the level of challenge by restricting the amount of playing surface available. Pupils learn quickly when tasks progress in such bite sized chunks.

The use of assessment at a whole school level is embryonic. A new tracking system has been introduced. This has not been in place long enough to provide robust data from which to analyse pupils' progress across the school and to set challenging targets thereby.

Overall, pupils make good progress in their learning. Evidence from the school's records, pupils' work in books, observations of lessons and discussions with pupils supports this judgement. From starting points which are wide and varied, pupils make good gains in learning and most achieve several good grades at GCSE. This enables almost all pupils to successfully move onto post-16 education, training or employment. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make similarly good progress to all pupils.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good. There are consistent expectations from staff regarding pupils' behaviour and in return most pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children settle to school life quickly, they enjoy learning and are happy in their surroundings. Pupils say there is little bullying and any minor incidents are dealt with quickly and well by staff. School records show only occasional incidents and actions in response to these are prompt and effective. Pupils with previous behavioural difficulties, who join the school, quickly improve their behaviour. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is good. Pupils' social development is promoted well through daily routines. For example, on arrival to school each morning pupils of all ages talk socially together on the yard. Staff who supervise join in. Clubs and additional activities in music and sport contribute well to pupils' social and cultural development. The school provides opportunities for stage performances and this enhances pupils' experiences. Pupils' self-esteem and confidence are successfully developed through regular praise for their achievements. Pupils show a good understanding of a range of faiths and beliefs. Opportunities to support fundraising activities in support of many charities are plentiful. The school council is currently planning three new ventures in this regard. One of these ideas is for a local restaurant recipe book which, in addition to raising funds, will aid pupils' cultural education by utilising the many and varied international cuisines present in the locality. The curriculum for PSHE effectively promotes pupils' empathy and tolerance of others' views and their knowledge and understanding of racial and equality issues. Pupils learn about British institutions through the history curriculum, visits to places of educational interest and assemblies which include learning about the work of the emergency services.

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Provision for the overall welfare, health and safety of pupils is outstanding. An extensive range of suitable policies and procedures are in place and these are reviewed annually. Staff are trained appropriately for first aid and in respect of child protection requirements. The proprietors ensure that the recruitment checks and vetting procedures for staff meet all the regulations. The rigour of pupil reviews for those with statements of special educational needs is first class. Case studies show very effective use of external agencies. Plans to improve pupils' personal development are detailed and sharply focused. The school premises are regularly risk assessed with appropriate consideration given to any potential dangers related, for example, to fire and security. Close circuit television cameras are installed for additional security. Staff care for pupils vigilantly and pupils say they feel very safe in school. The school curriculum includes teaching about healthy eating and provides lots of physical education activities. The school fulfils its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

All the required safeguarding checks on staff are made, such as those by the Criminal Records Bureau, and are recorded appropriately in a single central register.

Premises and accommodation at the school

The school premises and accommodation provide a good environment for pupils to learn and achieve. The building is arranged on four floors and provides many classrooms, offices, a computer suite, a kitchen and a dining hall. There is a separate school hall with a purpose built stage. Outside, the school has a several hard-surfaced yards and two gardens.

Provision of information

The school ensures that parents and carers are well informed about the school through a school prospectus and website. These provide all the required details. Reports are sent home and include extensive information about pupils' attainment and progress. There are regular detailed newsletters. The school complies with all requests from Ofsted and the Department for Education for information about the school.

Manner in which complaints are to be handled

The school's complaints policy and procedures fully meet the requirements.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The proprietor has ensured that the school meets all The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, schedule 1 ('the Regulations').

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- fully embed the newly introduced tracking system for recording pupils' attainment and progress
- use the outcomes of assessments at a whole school level to analyse pupils' progress and set challenging targets for pupils' future learning
- increase the curriculum options for pupils in the senior school.

Inspection judgements

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
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The quality of education

Overall quality of education		✓		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		✓		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		✓		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		✓		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		✓		
The behaviour of pupils		✓		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils	✓			
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School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Primary and secondary boarding		
Date school opened	1886		
Age range of pupils	3-19		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 29	Girls: 19	Total: 48
Number on roll (part-time pupils)	Boys: 2	Girls: 2	Total: 4
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 9	Girls: 1	Total: 10
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£4896-£6600		
Address of school	293 Clifton Drive South Lytham St Annes Lancashire FY8 1HN		
Telephone number	01253 725815		
Email address	principal@sacgs.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr S R Welsby and Mrs S M Welsby		
Proprietor	St Anne's College Limited		

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.



11 October 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The St Anne's College Grammar School, FY8 1HN

Thank you for welcoming us into your school when we visited you recently. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and would like to share with you what we found out about your school. We judged that your school provides a good quality of education. These are the main reasons why we judged the school to be good.

- The quality of teaching and the curriculum is good so that you make good progress, learn new skills and gain important qualifications.
- Your behaviour is good and you attend regularly.
- You enjoy school, feel very safe and you appreciate the efforts of the staff. In particular, the provision for your welfare, health and safety is outstanding.
- You are improving your personal and social skills which will help you in the future.

All schools need to develop and improve and we have asked that the staff increase the choice of courses available to pupils in the senior school. Also, the school must continue to track your progress and make better use of the school's assessments to set targets for your learning.

Thank you once again for all your help. We wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely,

**John Coleman
Her Majesty's Inspector**