

St Anne's Catholic School

Carlton Road, Southampton SO15 2WZ

Inspection dates 10–11 March 2016

Overall effectiveness **Outstanding**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
16 to 19 study programmes	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher's excellent leadership has improved all aspects of the school since the last inspection. Governors and senior leaders are highly effective. Together they have created a culture where staff and pupils flourish.
- The headteacher has systematically developed the staff so that they have high levels of expertise in teaching and learning.
- Governance is first-rate. Governors effectively contribute to the school's success because they rigorously monitor their impact on driving the school forward and challenge themselves and school leaders to do better where necessary.
- Outcomes are outstanding. Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils, challenging teaching and highly effective systems for tracking pupil progress ensure all groups of pupils, including the most able, achieve very well.
- Achievement at GCSE has improved every year for the last three years and is well above the national average. Progress is above average in all subject areas.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and their attendance is above average and improving.
- The school is a warm and caring community where pupils flourish. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is woven through lessons and is a particular strength of the school.
- Leaders and teachers have imparted the pupils with a very strong work ethic, a love of learning and a desire to excel.
- Disadvantaged pupils are very well supported and so make the same progress as, or better than, other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are also very well supported and so make very strong progress.
- The curriculum is effective in both key stages and in the 16–19 provision, and provides excellent opportunities for pupils' personal and academic development.
- Pupils are happy at St Anne's Catholic School and staff keep them safe. Leaders robustly monitor safeguarding procedures and ensure that no issues slip through the net.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teaching and assessment are as highly effective as that found in the best practice in the school.
- Improve the quality of communication with parents, including the quality and clarity of the school's website, policies and reports.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher's exceptional leadership has led to rapid improvements in all aspects of the school's work. Since her appointment two years ago, she has worked with governors and senior leaders to forge a dedicated and professional team who are all highly committed to achieving the best for every pupil. This culture of excellence means that pupils flourish because they receive highly effective teaching, challenge and support. As one parent commented, 'Successes are celebrated whilst further challenges are always encouraged, girls are truly nurtured and inspired to be the best that they can possibly be'.
- Senior leaders have developed an ethos where the school cares for the whole child. Leaders do not just ensure that all pupils make rapid progress academically, they develop pupils' love of learning and make sure that they are well cared for. As one sixth former remarked, 'This school is my second family'.
- Senior leaders have had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching. They lead by example and provide highly effective support and challenge for teachers. Leaders provide access to a wide-ranging package of relevant training which is particularly valued by teachers. All of the areas for improvement in teaching identified in the previous inspection report have been addressed. As a result, overall progress has accelerated rapidly and all groups of pupils achieve very well in the school.
- The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear vision of 'uncompromising ambition' and 'consistent improvement' and welcome new ideas to support school improvement. Leaders' evaluations of the school's effectiveness are sharply focused and they take the appropriate actions to make the necessary improvements.
- The school's approach to tracking pupils' progress is particularly effective. The deputy headteacher in charge of assessment maintains an accurate overview of the quality of assessments used by each subject and the progress that pupils make. In addition, the school has effectively developed tracking systems so that they monitor pupils' progress from their different starting points. As a result, leaders can accurately monitor the progress of all groups of pupils and effectively target support and interventions where necessary.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils particularly well. Leaders ensure that the school's Christian ethos and its vision to 'be the best you can possibly be' are at the heart of learning and school life. Staff share a clear understanding of how the well-taught curriculum, regular opportunities for learning outside of the school day and a range of opportunities to undertake leadership roles underpin pupils' achievements. As a result, the school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils is exceptional and personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Middle leaders and teachers respect and trust the headteacher and senior leaders. They value greatly the support and challenge that senior leaders bring to their work. Working together has ensured that teaching is highly effective and there are many outstanding features in English, mathematics and across the curriculum.
- Subject leaders are an enthusiastic and committed team and they are driven to continually improve standards in their subject areas. A culture of collaborative learning, coaching and professional dialogue has led to improved teaching and learning across the school.
- The staff surveys indicate that the effect of this teamwork makes teachers feel valued and staff morale is very high. One teacher commented, 'I have never enjoyed working in a school as much as this one, we are a proud team at every level', and another stated, 'I love working here'.
- Governors and leaders ensure effective use of the pupil premium funding (additional government funds). Actions taken by leaders have ensured that the attainment of disadvantaged pupils has continued to rise. Leaders and teachers have implemented a range of support to ensure that this group of pupils make accelerated progress and attain GCSE results that overall exceed other pupils nationally.
- Leaders make sure that the Year 7 catch-up funding is used to very good effect to raise standards of literacy and numeracy for those pupils arriving at the school with lower than average attainment in English, mathematics or both subjects.
- Leaders ensure that careers advice and guidance is very well organised and effective, and the library is well stocked with relevant information. Pupils in Key Stage 4 feel well informed about the range of opportunities open to them at age 16, including the variety of college courses, different institutions and the qualifications required to support their aspirations. Learners in the sixth form are given an effective programme of support and guidance to assist them to progress to their chosen universities and other destinations.

- The school works closely with a school improvement adviser to provide suitable support for staff. Regular monitoring and review visits take place to affirm both the accuracy of leaders' self-evaluation and the quality of their improvement work. Good liaison and close working relationships with other schools have led to better teaching and leadership in a range of subjects.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. The vast majority who contributed to Ofsted's online survey questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent. Nearly all who responded agreed that the school is well led and managed and that their child is safe and happy at the school and making very good progress. Some parents reported that they would appreciate improved communication from the school and that the website was out of date.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have a wealth of skills and educational experience which enable them to support and challenge leaders at all levels. The governing body shares the headteacher's aims and vision for the school and they manage the performance of the headteacher effectively. Governors ensure the fair and consistent application of policies. They also ensure that only the best teaching is rewarded with pay increases.
 - The governing body has successfully challenged leaders to raise the quality of teaching and learning and holds them to account for further improvements. Regular meetings and visits enable governors to evaluate aspects of the school, such as safeguarding, provision for pupils with special educational needs and the impact of the pupil premium funding. Governors scrutinise performance information, alongside externally produced analyses, in order to assess the success of the school against its own targets and national standards. As a result, they have a good understanding of the school's performance and its day-to-day work.
 - Governors and leaders are aware that communication with parents could be improved. Leaders are currently redeveloping the school's website and improving the clarity and quality of some policies and reports to address this.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are very effective. The deputy headteacher who leads this aspect of the school's work is passionate in ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable pupils are met. Referrals are made swiftly where pupils' needs are such that they require assistance from the local authority. Detailed timelines and records are kept and the impact of external agencies is monitored closely, enabling swift intervention if there are any delays. Good systems ensure regular and high-quality training for all staff and secure the well-being and safety of pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment across the school is of very high quality; much is outstanding, including in the sixth form. This is because a shared drive to improve teaching is placed at the heart of the school's work. Leaders and teachers see themselves as professional learners and seek to improve their practice continuously.
- Teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses well and have very high expectations. As a consequence, there is mutual respect between teachers and pupils and a very studious learning atmosphere. Pupils are rightly proud of the high-quality and neatly presented work in their books and on display around the school.
- Staff use their specialist subject knowledge to good effect to design and deliver stimulating and engaging lessons. Inspectors witnessed particularly good examples of this in mathematics, English, geography and health and social care. Access to accurate and detailed information about pupils' achievement enables teachers to provide them with additional support and challenge within and outside lessons. Pupils and their parents praised the quality of teaching.
- Teaching in English and mathematics is exemplary and enables pupils to make exceptionally good progress. In English, group work is used particularly well and pupils are challenged to creatively analyse texts and use extended writing to develop deeper thinking. In mathematics, teachers model mathematical techniques well and challenge pupils to think deeply by spotting relationships and solving problems.
- Teachers' planning is effective and ensures that little time is wasted in lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together as a highly effective team to support pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
- Most teachers skilfully promote learning by using thought-provoking resources together with good questioning to ensure high levels of challenge and engagement. For example, in a Year 9 history lesson,

pupils were challenged to consider different views as to whether the bombing of Dresden in World War 2 had been a war crime or not. The teacher's skilful questioning motivated and challenged all pupils and facilitated a high-level debate with reflection on the social, cultural and moral implications of war.

- Teachers ensure that the most-able pupils are regularly challenged in lessons through extension tasks which promote deep thinking and evaluation and which link different topics. This gives the most-able pupils the confidence to engage with and successfully complete high-level test questions. Teachers also encourage independent learning through participation, including undertaking leadership roles in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. As a result, confidence and self-belief are nurtured and the most-able pupils develop very high aspirations together with the knowledge and skills to achieve them.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the 16–19 study programmes is very effective; teachers know their learners well and set regular tests using examination questions from previous years. They model good answers and provide detailed feedback to demonstrate how sixth formers can improve their performance in future tests. Teachers modify their teaching in response to any misconceptions highlighted by learners' answers to test questions.
- The school's work to develop reading skills is very effective. The library is well used and pupils who need extra support make impressive gains in their reading skills as a result of a well-planned series of interventions.
- All subjects are promoting improvements in literacy through a strong focus on grammar and the accurate use of subject-specific vocabulary. This is particularly effective in art, music, science, geography and history. During lessons, pupils are regularly encouraged to contribute to class discussions before attempting to develop their thoughts in writing. Many pupils find this helpful to clarify and sequence their thoughts.
- Nearly all teachers give very effective feedback to pupils in line with the school's expectations. Where this happens, pupils clearly understand what they have to do to improve and act upon this feedback. However, there are a small minority of instances when pupils are not clear enough about how well they are doing and how to improve because feedback is not as precise as the school expects. These inconsistencies exist across and within departments. Leaders are ensuring steps are under way to address this by using examples of high-impact feedback to model good practice.
- In a very small minority of lessons, including in science and history, insufficient challenge by teachers means that the pace of learning is slower than is found elsewhere. Where this is the case, leaders identify training and support for the teachers in order for them to improve their practice.
- Homework is set in line with the school policy and is used well to extend learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school interprets its Christian ethos broadly to teach respect for all faiths, cultures and backgrounds and for those with no faith. Pupils were keen to explain to inspectors that the school is a culturally diverse community, and that they 'have a lot of respect in each other' and that 'We are a very caring and accepting school'. This culture of celebrating diversity promotes equality and ensures all pupils receive an excellent preparation for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils value the respect that they are shown and the many opportunities to get involved in the life of the school. They enthusiastically embrace, and recognise how they benefit from, getting involved in the wealth of clubs, trips and activities that the school offers. These include: school productions; six different school choirs; creative writing club; various sports clubs; music ensembles and participating in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.
- Tutor time is used well to reflect on current affairs and explore moral and ethical issues. The well-led house system promotes pupils' support of local and national charities as well as giving pupils opportunities to get involved in a wide range of competitions and events. As a result, pupils are self-confident, articulate and very well prepared for the next stages of their education, training or employment.
- Pupils are safe in the school and they feel safe. Leaders are clear that pupils' welfare is paramount and good systems are in place to offer help and support, involving external agencies when appropriate. Some older pupils take on responsibility through mentoring and supporting younger ones. Parents report that their children are well looked after and feel happy at the school.

- Attendance is good. This is due to a concerted approach by the school in showing the value of good attendance and responding to any persistent absence assertively. Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs or disability have missed too much school in the past. This disparity has been addressed and there are no longer any significant differences in the attendance of different groups.
- Careers advice and guidance is well organised and effective. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are able to speak with confidence about the range of opportunities open to them at age 16, including the variety of courses, different institutions and qualifications needed to support their aspirations. They are well prepared for their next stage of education, employment or training.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Both in lessons and when moving around the school site, pupils are calm and sensible. They are keen to learn, polite, courteous and friendly towards each other, staff and visitors. They are proud of their school and look after it well. There is an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.
- Behaviour in most lessons is exemplary. Pupils are punctual and come to lessons well equipped and ready to learn. The vast majority of pupils are keen, attentive and thoughtful in class.
- Parents, staff and pupils all agree that behaviour is managed well at school. Incidents of poor behaviour are very rare and the rates of exclusion are well below national levels.
- The very small number of pupils who attend alternative provision at Southampton City College for part of the week are very well cared for. Good relationships and communication between the school and the college ensure that the welfare needs of these pupils are met. In addition, regular reviews and updates are provided on the progress that they are making on their vocational courses.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Over the past three years, outcomes have improved strongly. Typically, pupils start Year 7 with attainment in line with national averages. By the time they reach the end of Year 11, the proportion of pupils achieving five good GCSEs including English and mathematics is well above the national average.
- Outcomes are consistently good in all subject areas. Teachers monitor pupils' learning well and provide a wide range of focused support and guidance for those who lag behind. Pupils make significantly more than average progress in English, mathematics and across all subjects.
- Leaders and teachers have very high expectations and so pupils from all starting points make above national average progress in all subjects. In 2014, the most-able pupils achieved in line with national averages; this significantly improved in 2015. Heads of subjects ensure effective teaching and learning strategies are used to challenge the most-able pupils so they progress well to achieve the highest grades at GCSE and aspire to study further.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well and their attainment is improving. The gap between their outcomes and those of other pupils nationally has closed.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability are supported well and so by the end of Key Stage 4 they make the same good progress as their peers.
- Pupils with English as an additional language achieve particularly well. This is because the support they receive is well matched to their needs and allows them to play a full part in lessons and the life of the college. Similarly, pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as other pupils.
- Pupils who arrive from primary school needing to catch up in English, mathematics or both are given the right support to help them improve.

16 to 19 study programmes

are outstanding

- Although the sixth form has reduced in size, the school provides effective careers advice and guidance and a suitable range of study pathways with clear routes to further study or employment. Learners in the sixth form are ambitious; most progress to university and some to further education, training or employment in their chosen field.
- Good relationships, together with challenging and inspiring teaching, ensure that the most-able learners make very good progress in the sixth form. Learners are effusive about their high aspirations and high

expectations. Increasing numbers are attaining places at the top universities.

- Leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of the sixth form well. They are ambitious and have detailed plans and strategies in place to accomplish them.
- Subject leaders regularly check learners' progress towards demanding targets. A range of support measures are delivered by subject teachers and tutors for any learners who start to fall behind. Sixth formers take a pride in their school and they appreciate the support teachers give them.
- Teaching in the sixth form is of the highest quality. Teachers have very high expectations and use their expert subject knowledge to design learning activities which engage and challenge learners. Teachers regularly ask probing questions which demand that learners think deeply and make connections between topics. Detailed feedback enables many learners to work independently to improve the quality of their work. As a result, they learn very well in lessons and over time.
- Sixth formers make progress above national averages. Attainment in the range of A-level subjects has been above national averages in the past and continues to be so now.
- Leaders ensure that the very small number of learners who entered the sixth form without English or mathematics at GCSE grade C or above are supported to retake the exam and improve their grades. This is a significant improvement on the previous year.
- The conduct of sixth formers around the school is exemplary and they provide good role models for younger pupils. Sixth formers are mature, tolerant and respectful of difference. They have a very good understanding of how to look after themselves and be safe.
- Tutor time is used well to reflect on spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues and help learners prepare for adult life. In addition, learners experience regular work-related learning. Sixth formers told inspectors that they particularly value the wide range of enrichment activities and one-to-one support that the school offers. Many learners take up leadership roles, for example mentoring younger pupils or volunteering for charity fundraising events. This contributes well to their development as responsible citizens.

School details

Unique reference number	138476
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	10003424

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
11-18	11-18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in 16 to 19 study programmes	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,079
Of which, number on roll in 16 to 19 study programmes	112
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Clare Fearon
Headteacher	Lyn Bourne
Telephone number	02380 328200
Website	www.st-annes.uk.com
Email address	info@st-annes.uk.com
Date of previous inspection	1-2 February 2012

Information about this school

- St Anne's Catholic School is a slightly larger than average-sized secondary school for girls.
- The school converted to become an academy in August 2012. When its predecessor school, also called St Anne's Catholic School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school has a small sixth form which also admits boys.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after) is in line with the national average. Some pupils are eligible for the Year 7 catch-up premium.
- A small number of pupils in Key Stage 4 attend alternative provision at Southampton City College to study vocational courses.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is well below the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or education, health or care plan is very low.
- Nearly two thirds of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Approximately half of the pupils speak English as their first language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils in 36 lessons in order to gather evidence to contribute to inspectors' evaluation of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. In addition, walks around the school were conducted jointly with members of the school leadership team to observe what the school provides and pupils' learning. Inspectors also attended tutor periods and an assembly, visited the library and observed pupils' conduct around the site at break and lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body, senior leaders, teachers and support staff, the school's improvement adviser and several groups of pupils.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation, including that relating to policies, the minutes of governors' meetings, strategic planning documents, safety, self-evaluation documents, pupil achievement, behaviour and attendance information and a wide range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in 102 responses to Ofsted's online survey (Parent View), 65 staff questionnaires and 199 pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

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