

The St. Anne's College Grammar School

293 Clifton Drive South, Lytham St. Anne's, Lancashire FY8 1HN

Inspection dates

20–22 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a very inclusive school. Pupils who have a wide range of abilities and backgrounds flourish. Leaders have created a culture where pupils feel safe, secure and respect one another. Pupils have very high expectations of the standards of behaviour that they want to see within the school. Pupils are instrumental in ensuring that the school's ethos is maintained.
- Leaders see the promotion of pupils' well-being and positive mental health as a priority. All staff quickly develop an understanding of the needs of each pupil. They take very effective steps to ensure that pupils settle into the school quickly and begin to learn effectively. Staff also use their detailed knowledge of each pupil to support and guide them towards achieving their aspirations. This includes providing an adaptable curriculum and a good range of school activities.
- Teachers generally cope well with the very wide ability range in their classes, and pupils make good progress. The quality of the teaching of English is very high and pupils achieve particularly well in this subject.
- Provision for children in the early years is particularly effective.
- Pupils who continue their education in the sixth form are well served by the school. Their good achievement, excellent care, guidance and support and excellent personal development help these pupils to gain access to high-quality courses and training on leaving the school.
- Leaders and teachers evaluate how well pupils develop and achieve by considering pupils' results on leaving the school. Leaders and teachers are not clear about how well pupils' progress from their very varying starting points. This limits the accuracy with which leaders and teachers evaluate how well pupils are performing. A lack of systematic analysis limits leaders' ability to identify, with precision, what is working very well in the school and the aspects that need to improve.
- The proprietor and leaders ensure the school meets the standards set by the Department of Education for independent schools.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the accuracy of leaders' evaluations of all features of the school's work in order to enable them to more effectively pinpoint aspects of significant success and aspects that are in need of improvement by:
 - using the school's clear understanding of pupils' developmental, emotional and academic starting points in order to establish well-defined expectations of how pupils should progress and develop throughout their time at the school
 - periodically analysing how well pupils are developing and performing
 - ensuring that staff take effective action if a pupil is identified as not progressing or developing in the way that could reasonably be expected of them.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- St. Anne's College aims to provide high-quality education in a nurturing environment where pupils can retain their individuality and succeed academically. The levels of care and pupils' well-being are outstanding because leaders invest heavily in ensuring that pupils' individual emotional needs are met. All teachers strive to ensure that pupils feel safe, secure and prepared to learn.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well established, is of high quality and is central to the school's ethos. Pupils have a very clear understanding of right from wrong, and they live up to very high expectations. Leaders have ensured that there is a good range of beneficial activities to enrich pupils' experiences and promote their personal development. Pupils have a good understanding of different faiths and the fact that people may have no allegiance to any religion.
- The quality of professional development provided by the school for its staff has improved. Most teachers talk about recent training that has had an impact on their performance in the classroom. Many cite recent training on the promotion of well-being and emotional health as being particularly effective.
- Leaders ensure that there is a framework to deliver a good-quality and appropriate curriculum across the whole school. Pupils begin to specialise in the secondary phase, and all pupils follow a curriculum that matches closely their needs and aspirations. Teachers ensure that pupils participate in a good range of additional activities, which broadens their experience and adds to their enjoyment of learning.
- Leaders establish a clear understanding of pupils' emotional needs when they join the school. Pupils also take cognitive tests, and these show that most pupils attending St. Anne's College have middle to high intellectual ability. The needs of all pupils, including pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are clearly established. Leaders ensure that this information is passed to teachers. Leaders do not use this high-quality information well enough as pupils progress through the school. Leaders' evaluations on how well the school is performing are often based on opinion or on the grades pupils attain on leaving the school. Leaders do not, with any confidence, evaluate the development and progress of pupils throughout their schooling and so they are unable to identify where improvements need to be made to ensure that pupils reach their academic potential.
- The school's coordinator for the provision for pupils with SEND (SENCo) uses her extensive experience to accurately identify pupils' needs. She follows procedures systematically and she ensures that other staff are well briefed on how to support pupils with SEND.
- The school was judged as requiring improvement at its last inspection. At that time, the school failed to meet some of the standards set by the Department of Education for independent schools. The proprietor and leaders have ensured these standards are now met. In addition, leaders have also made good progress on improving other aspects of provision identified as weaknesses at the last inspection.

Governance

- The two proprietors are also the school's principals and they perform the role of governors. They are highly successful in creating a vision of the specific type of school they want St. Anne's College to be. With the school's deputy headteacher, they are becoming increasingly effective in holding others to account for the realisation of that vision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and pupils are safe.
- In everyday life, pupils model a caring disposition towards their peers and indeed towards everyone they meet. They do this because they believe it is the right way to live their lives. St. Anne's College pupils are also prepared to speak up when they see injustice or think something is wrong. Leaders have created a culture where pupils are at the forefront of ensuring that the school provides a safe environment in which to learn. This culture is backed up with staff expertise and sound procedures.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote safety through teaching pupils how to identify and deal with potential dangers. This includes the use of social media when out and about in their communities and when at home.
- Pupils say that there are many aspects of the school that help them to feel safe. These include supervision by staff during breaktimes and lunchtimes, CCTV systems throughout the school and the knowledge that they can seek guidance if they have any concerns.
- Procedures to recruit only suitable persons to new posts and train them are robust. All staff are well trained to respond to concerns that they may have about a pupil and know how to respond to a pupil disclosing information to them.
- The school's safeguarding policy, which is of good quality, is available to parents on the school's website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers take great care to ensure that there is a positive culture in their classrooms and that pupils are in the right frame of mind to learn. Teachers give good support and encouragement to pupils. Teachers, particularly in the junior classes, develop good learning activities that pupils find fun and engaging.
- Special support assistants are given detailed guidance on the needs of pupils they work with, and they help those pupils with SEND make good progress.
- In the main, teachers follow the national curriculum guidelines. Teachers usually ensure that there is a systematic progression of knowledge and understanding. However, where teachers do not have in-depth conversations with teachers in other phases, some learning is repeated without benefit to pupils.
- The teaching of English is strong in all phases of the school. Pupils' capacity to read and write well is built on a very effective phonics programme that starts with the youngest pupils. Teachers of junior classes develop well pupils' understanding of punctuation, grammar and spelling. They also help pupils write with flair and enjoy reading. English in

the secondary phase is very well taught. Teachers develop activities that are both very engaging and help pupils deepen their understanding and improve their skills.

- In other subjects, and in attempting to be supportive, occasionally teachers do not provide the right level of challenge for the most able to excel. Nevertheless, their progress is good because this practice is not widespread or common.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding and is at the heart of what this school does best.
- A culture of equality of opportunity pervades the whole school. This is manifest in the school's approach to supporting pupils to flourish. Staff take great care to get to know their pupils' needs and strengths. The efforts of staff to break down barriers to pupils' learning and provide high-quality support are exemplary. This includes the extent to which staff go to support pupils who have mental health needs and pupils with SEND.
- Those pupils who joined St. Anne's College from other schools, and there are many, say that their confidence and self-esteem have improved rapidly. They also say that the safe, secure and calm atmosphere enables them to be who they want to be and so to get on with learning.
- Pupils' physical development and health are also a priority, and pupils are encouraged to take frequent exercise, participate in sport and other physical activities and eat well.
- Pupils say that bullying is virtually non-existent. When it does occur, the perpetrator would be new to the school. Staff and pupils work together to help eliminate quickly all forms of bullying and poor behaviour based on prejudice.
- Teachers adopt a variety of strategies to help pupils learn how to be safe, whether they are at school, in their communities or using social media.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils respond very positively to the high behavioural standards expected by the school's leadership team. Pupils want high standards of behaviour and take an active role in attaining them. Pupils model excellent behaviour towards each other and are disapproving when occasionally a pupil does not behave well enough. They understand why their peers can occasionally misbehave and support them in putting things right.
- The atmosphere in classes is industrious and positive. Pupils are keen to engage with activities and most take pride in the presentation of their work. There is little disruption to learning through misbehaviour and, in most classes, there is none.
- Staff and pupils know that for some pupils behaving well can be difficult. Excellent support and guidance for these pupils enables them to improve their behaviour quickly and permanently.

- Attendance appears average. However, this superficial analysis masks the fact that many pupils have significant medical needs that require time away from school and sometimes lengthy stays in hospital. Pupils are punctual to school and to classes.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- There are no publicly available analyses of the achievement of St. Anne's College pupils. The numbers of pupils sitting external examinations are low, so statistical analysis would be unreliable.
- Pupils start in St. Anne's College with a wide range of prior attainment. Many pupils who join this school experience considerable difficulties in their life. Some have medical needs and others have poor mental health. The proportion of pupils in this school who have an education and health care plan is larger than in most schools. From a diverse range of starting points, pupils make good progress because they are very well supported by all staff, and they experience good teaching.
- Pupils' achievement is good across all phases of the school and across most subjects, including mathematics. Achievement in English is consistently strong.
- Most older pupils develop confidence in being able to learn well. They have very good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is excellent. Most pupils have strong literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils are generally well prepared to move on to their next stage of learning or employment. The school shows adaptability in enabling pupils to work in classes which provide for their needs rather than with their chronological age class. Occasionally, a pupil will work with an older class. Or a pupil will 'stay on a year' to help them build confidence and add to their learning, before they move on to their next step, for which for they are well prepared.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years are very well led. Experienced and enthusiastic leadership ensures that staff are clear about what they are expected to do, and the standards expected of them. Children are evidently happy in the early years setting and enjoy their time there.
- Classrooms are bright and stimulating. Outdoor spaces are less well resourced. The layout of the buildings and playgrounds make it difficult for children to move freely and easily between classrooms and their outdoor spaces. Teachers are aware of this and take effective steps to ensure that children learn in a range of indoor and outdoor environments.
- Staff monitor children's development closely and accurately. Staff use this information to help them plan what children need to learn next. They are skilled in providing a good range of activities and resources to stimulate children's curiosity and engage their interest.
- Good leadership, teaching and support ensure that children make good progress from starting points which are typical for their age. This includes those children who are considered to be disadvantaged. Children with SEND are well cared for and supported. Leaders ensure that all staff understand how to support these children.

- Children are taught, through stories and role plays, how to be safe and what they should do if they are uncertain in a situation. Children follow instructions carefully and show good levels of concentration. They happily share resources and take turns.
- Links with parents are good, and they are well informed about how well their children are learning and developing.

Sixth-form provision

Good

- The priority seen in all other phases of the school to promote students' personal development and well-being continues throughout the sixth form. There is also a systematic approach to developing pupils' leadership skills by giving them some responsibilities in helping with the running of the school. The standards of behaviour and attitudes of pupils in the sixth form are outstanding, and they are excellent role models for the younger pupils in the school.
- Pupils in the sixth form are offered a range of, mainly A-level, courses, including sciences, mathematics and arts. Pupils achieve well. Staff work closely with pupils to establish which path they want to follow beyond school. Pupils are given high-quality and impartial advice and guidance about the opportunities available to them beyond school. Staff organise useful experiences for pupils in a range of work environments. Pupils take part in a good range of visits, including to exhibitions, talks and to universities. Most pupils move on to the university, college or employment sector to which they aspire. It is rare for a pupil to start studying in the sixth form and not to complete their courses.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and combine this with an excellent understanding of pupils' needs. They provide pupils with precise guidance on how to improve their understanding. Overall, the quality of teaching in the sixth form is good.
- Leadership in the sixth form is very effective. Leaders strive successfully to personalise the experience for every pupil through the curriculum, wider opportunities, support and guidance.

School details

Unique reference number	119819
DfE registration number	888/6001
Inspection number	10053723

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, 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.

Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	5
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	St. Anne's College Ltd
Chair	There is no chair.
Headteacher	S. R. Welsby and S. M. Welsby
Annual fees (day pupils)	£5580–£8268
Telephone number	01253 725 815
Website	www.sacgs.co.uk
Email address	principal@sacgs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–6 October 2016

Information about this school

- The St. Anne's College Grammar School is registered as an independent day school which provides full-time education for up to 151 girls and boys aged from two to 19.
- A larger proportion of pupils than average have an education, health and care plan.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.

- The school's 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'. Many pupils in St. Anne's College joined the school part way through their education.
- The school is divided into a junior school and a senior school. Currently, the junior school is organised into a Nursery for children aged from two to three, a combined Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 class, a class for Year 3, and a combined class for Years 4 to 6. The senior school comprises of Year 7 to Year 11 classes. Additionally, there is a small sixth form.
- There are separate principals for the junior and senior schools. This husband and wife team are also the directors of the company which is the school's proprietor.
- The school is situated in a large building surrounded by play areas for pupils. The school also makes use of the gardens of two adjacent houses.
- The school was last inspected in October 2016.
- No pupils from St. Anne's College attend alternative provision organised by the school. The school does not use any off-site accommodation. However, it does use local sporting facilities to broaden the pupils' experience of physical education.
- During this inspection, the inspector was aware of a serious incident that had occurred since the previous inspection and that involved a child who attends this school. While Ofsted does not have the power to investigate incidents of this kind, actions taken by the school in response to the incident were considered, alongside the other evidence available at the time of the inspection, to inform inspectors' judgements.

Information about this inspection

- Throughout the inspection, the inspector worked closely with the school's proprietors who are also the school's principals. He also worked closely with the school's deputy headteacher.
- The inspector talked with pupils. The inspector took account of 13 responses to Parent View and 12 free-text comments from parents to him. The inspector spoke with individual teachers. He took account of 17 questionnaires completed by staff for the inspection.
- The inspector spoke with a representative of one of the local authorities that sends pupils to this school and the Local Authority Designated Officer for the same local authority.
- School documents were scrutinised, including: safeguarding checks, information about pupils' achievement and records of checks on the quality of teaching.
- The inspector visited classrooms to speak with pupils and observe them learn. The inspector looked at pupils' work which captured their learning over a long period of time.
- Senior leaders were party to most of the inspection activities.

Inspection team

Neil Mackenzie, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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