

Inspection of St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy

Thornhill Terrace, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR2 7JN

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 January 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected ten years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have ensured that the Mercy ethos of this Catholic school is an important aspect of this caring and welcoming school. The uniqueness of every pupil is celebrated and nurtured. This is a calm and harmonious school where pupils receive a good quality of education and are increasingly well-prepared for their next steps. New school leaders are taking the right actions to make further improvements to what pupils, including those in the sixth form, experience.

Pupils know that they are safe and looked after by caring adults who have their best interests at heart. Pupils know that if they had any concerns or worries, they could go to a trusted adult who would help them. The great majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around school. This is a happy school, with respectful relationships. Bullying rarely happens. When it does, leaders take swift action.

Staff provide plentiful opportunities for pupils to take part in new and varied experiences. Some pupils have leadership roles in school, such as being a 'transition buddy' and others have been trained as 'peer mentors'. Pupils are rightly proud of the many ways that they contribute to both the school and wider community.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have a commitment for ambition and excellence for pupils. New school leaders have united staff in their pursuit of this vision. These leaders are taking the right steps to making this vision a reality. Pupils benefit from the strong curriculum offer. This includes in the sixth form, where there is a broad range of academic subjects in place, complemented by a range of vocational qualifications that are relevant to the local labour market.

In the majority of subjects, leaders have identified the precise knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember over time. This gives teachers the information they need about what to teach and how to teach it. There are regular opportunities for pupils to return to this important knowledge over time. This includes through regular 'retrieval starters' at the start of lessons. Pupils, including sixth-form students, value these quizzes. They know that it helps them to learn important facts and subject-specific concepts. In a few subjects, subject leaders have not given as thorough consideration to precisely what pupils need to learn in order to develop their knowledge and understanding. Where this is the case, pupils' knowledge is more fragile.

Staff build strong relationships with pupils. Pupils say they are well-supported. Students in the sixth form value the expertise of their teachers. Teachers are skilled at bringing subjects to life for students. This raises pupils' aspirations. Many pupils are excited about their next steps.

Staff know pupils and their needs well. Leaders make sure that teachers have the information they need about those pupils with special educational needs and/or

disabilities (SEND). This helps teachers to plan effective sequences of teaching that all pupils can access. As a result, pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Leaders are committed to developing highly literate pupils who have a love of reading. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to learn and use subject-specific and technical language. Younger pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read are swiftly identified. As a result of the effective support they receive, these pupils quickly learn to read fluently. A few older pupils, however, are not confident readers. They have not had the benefit of what is now in place.

Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect towards staff and to each other. Students in the sixth form share teachers' high ambitions of what they can achieve. They are determined to do well and demonstrate a strong work ethic. The newly implemented careers guidance in the sixth form is now an appropriately ambitious offer for all students. Leaders are rapidly addressing the previous shortfall for those students in year 13.

Leaders have a steadfast commitment to developing every pupil as a valued member of this vibrant community. Pupils flourish as a result of the many opportunities they have to broaden their experiences and horizons. However, some pupils, including those in the sixth form, have limited knowledge of some aspects of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum. New leaders have recently acted to strengthen this area of provision, so that pupils are better prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governors and trustees know the school well. They check that school leaders are taking the right decisions for both pupils and staff. Governors ask insightful questions to check that the school continues to improve. Staff are excited to be part of this journey. They share leaders' vision for what they can do together for the benefit of all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that all staff have received appropriate safeguarding training. Staff receive regular safeguarding reminders to help them to continue to be vigilant. Staff know the signs that suggest a pupil might be at risk of harm. Staff promptly report any concerns and leaders swiftly follow these up. The actions leaders take are accurately recorded.

Pupils, including those in the sixth form, know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They know the importance of healthy relationships and important concepts, such as consent. The new PSHE curriculum gives even more opportunities for pupils to debate and discuss important safeguarding issues.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders have not fully mapped out the important subject-specific concepts that teachers need to teach. This means that pupils learn less in some subjects than in others. Leaders should work with teachers to map out and teach the key substantive and disciplinary knowledge that pupils need to know.
- The PSHE curriculum is not securely embedded. Some pupils cannot recall important knowledge. Leaders should continue to develop this curriculum to ensure that the important messages it contains further enhances pupils' personal development.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	138054
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10266124
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1341
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	236
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mr Daniel O'Mahoney
Headteacher	Francesca Craik
Website	www.st-anthonys-academy.com
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 March 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust. The school is designated as having a religious character. It was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in June 2018. The next section 48 inspection is due by June 2023.
- The current head of school and executive headteacher were appointed in January 2022. Additional senior leadership capacity has been provided through the trust.
- In the sixth form, the school works in association with another school.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school holds a number of awards and accreditations, including the World Class Schools Quality Mark and the gold award for the School Games Mark.

- The school makes use of three registered alternative providers of education for a small number of pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including school leaders and representatives of both the local governing committee and the trust. They spoke to teaching and support staff. Inspectors met with teachers who are at the early stages of their career.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, history, modern foreign languages and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in PSHE and in reading. An inspector listened to pupils read. Inspectors visited lessons in wider subjects.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. They scrutinised important safeguarding records. Inspectors spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe.
- The views of parents were considered through the responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey and through emails received during the inspection. The views of pupils were considered through responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, as well as through meetings held with pupils.
- The views of staff were considered through meetings held with staff and from the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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