

St Anne's Academy

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135313
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	348985
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Marguerite McCloy HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	657
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Nicholas Feist
Principal	Mr Eric Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Academy address	Hollin Lane Middleton Manchester M24 6XN
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 35 lessons and observed 35 teachers. They also saw other teachers and support staff in lessons, registrations and assemblies. They held meetings with the Principal, members of staff, groups of students and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including: the academy's development plans and key policies; tracking information on students' progress; reports by the Academy's Improvement Partner and minutes of governing body meetings.

Inspectors analysed 198 inspection questionnaires completed by parents and carers and 98 from students.

- the quality of learning and progress made by all groups of students
- the success of the academy in engaging and motivating students, particularly those who are potentially vulnerable, disaffected or persistent non-attenders
- the accuracy of the academy's view that teaching is good
- how well the academy is developing the overall effectiveness of its relatively new sixth form
- how effectively leaders and managers are driving improvements and strengthening the academy's capacity for further improvement.

Information about the school

St Anne's Academy opened in September 2007. Students and the majority of the staff transferred from the predecessor school. The academy is jointly sponsored by the Church of England Diocese of Manchester, and David and Anne Crossland, and its ethos is based on Christian values. The academy's specialisms are in information and communication technology (ICT) and the Built Environment.

The academy is a smaller than average-sized secondary school that is steadily growing in numbers, both in the main school and the sixth form. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is significantly higher than average. A very large majority of students are of White British heritage and only a small but growing number do not speak English as their first language. Most of these are from Eastern European backgrounds. The proportions of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and of those with a statement of special educational needs, are above average.

The academy has Healthy Schools accreditation, and Facilitator School status with the National College of School Leadership. It is recognised as a resource hub for work within the Greater Manchester Challenge programme.

The academy is due to move into its new building on the same site in September 2010.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St. Anne's Academy provides a good education for students and some aspects of its work are outstanding. The inspirational work of the Principal and other senior leaders ensures that a clear vision and high aspirations for all students pervade the academy's inclusive ethos. The impact of this is evident in students' good overall outcomes and the outstanding care, guidance and support that are tailored to their individual needs. The academy's exemplary work in this field particularly helps to remove barriers to learning and ensure that students who are potentially vulnerable are given every possible chance to succeed.

The achievement of all groups of learners is good: attainment is broadly average by the time they leave the academy, representing good and sometimes excellent progress from their starting points. This is because in the very large majority of lessons, teaching is good or better and the curriculum meets students' needs well. Almost all students who completed an inspection questionnaire agreed that they learn a lot in lessons; teachers are interested in their views; adults care about them and explain how to improve their work. Inspectors agree with these views and observed good levels of enjoyment in most lessons.

Most teachers use assessment well, to inform lesson plans and to support learning by well-focused questioning and oral feedback to students.

Despite the academy's rigorous monitoring systems and promotion of good attendance, this remains low overall, particularly for some groups of students in Years 10 and 11. The academy has had some success in raising levels of attendance and reducing the number of persistent absentees, but this continues to be a difficult challenge. For some students, poor attendance has a negative impact on the development of their future workplace skills and economic well-being.

Students participate in and help to organise fund-raising activities for charities and some take on other responsibilities, for example sixth-form students supporting younger students in their learning. Students make a satisfactory contribution to the school and its community but there are insufficient opportunities for all students to take on responsibilities or participate in decision making.

The academy's partnership work with a wide range of other providers, organisations and services is outstanding and provides excellent value for money. It has a positive impact on the learning and well-being of both the academy's students and those of its partners. Overall, however, the academy provides good value for money because students' outcomes are good.

The satisfactory sixth form is well led and provides a good curriculum and teaching that

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meets students' needs well. Outcomes are improving and the academy is aware of the need to ensure that this is sustained. The significant developments to raise attainment and enable students of all ages and abilities to achieve well are indicative of the academy's good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the extent to which students take on responsibilities and play a full part in the life of the academy and its wider community by:
- developing 'student voice' more systematically so that all students are enabled to engage in decision making or consultation about issues which affect their learning and well-being
- increasing the range of opportunities available for students to develop leadership and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being
- seeking the views of parents and carers more regularly to contribute to action plans for improving students' involvement in the work of the academy and its role in the community.
- Improve the overall effectiveness of the sixth form by:
- building on the academy's early success to embed and sustain the good leadership and management of the sixth form
- consolidate and further enhance the good provision evident in the sixth form curriculum and quality of teaching
- ensure that the above actions can result in good overall outcomes for all students.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Students' achievement is good. In the first two years of GCSE examinations since the academy opened, results came close to the national average in a number of subjects, most notably in English, reflecting the significant progress made as a result of a rigorous focus on improving literacy skills across the academy. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C rose in 2009 to marginally above the national average. Particular successes were achieved in art and design examinations. The percentage of students gaining five or more A* to C grades including English and mathematics rose to just 4% below the national figure. Furthermore, the current Year 11 students are on track to meet or exceed that figure in 2010, representing outstanding progress for this group when taking into account their starting points. Indeed, the academy is particularly proud of its successes in enabling many students who would not otherwise have been able to do so, to achieve D or E grades against the odds. Inspection evidence confirms a rising trend in attainment, as a result of the good and sometimes excellent progress that students make in lessons. This is because the vast majority of students have positive attitudes, enjoy their learning and respond well to good teaching. Relationships between adults and students are very positive and this contributes to their good behaviour and the mutual respect seen in most classes.

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Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly good progress in the academy's inclusive environment and are well supported by teaching assistants or learning mentors. Most students feel safe and are confident in the knowledge that they would be able to talk to one of the adults in the academy about issues that may be troubling them. Students are aware of health issues related to smoking, alcohol and drug abuse and understand the benefits of physical exercise. Many take advantage of the opportunities available not only through the curriculum but also in after-school clubs or within the local area.

Students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well by a number of curriculum projects and visits to places of interest in this country and abroad, and the academy's link with a school in Kenya.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good, particularly in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form where the highest proportions of good or outstanding teaching was observed. As a result, most students are well motivated and keen to improve their learning. They respond well to

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

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the opportunities teachers provide for them to understand how to improve their learning and study skills and engage in independent research, collaborative group work and discussions. Teachers plan their lessons in detail using the academy's agreed format. They make appropriate and imaginative use of resources, including interactive whiteboard technology, to enhance lessons and promote learning. The impact of the academy's work to continually develop teachers' skills is seen in the consistency with which they inject pace and enthusiasm into lessons. Their subject knowledge is very strong and teachers are keen to provide high levels of challenge to students. In a small minority of lessons, usually in Key Stage 3, this is not backed up by effective strategies to ensure good progression in learning for students of all ability groups. Learning mentors and teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers to make a good contribution to lessons. Questioning and plenaries are used well to review learning during and at the end of lessons, so that students are aware of how well they are working towards their learning targets.

Where teachers' marking in books is of good quality, this makes a valuable contribution to students understanding of exactly what they need to do next to improve and move up to the next level or grade. Recent improvements in marking have been successful; however, this is not a consistent picture across the academy.

The good curriculum is well matched to students' learning needs and provides a broad range of experiences to contribute to their good personal development. There is a strong focus on improving students' skills in literacy, numeracy, science, and information and communication technology (ICT). Good provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for example in reading, enables them to make good progress. The academy's 'boot camp' initiative is proving particularly successful in helping to raise the mathematics and English grades for groups of students who are on the borderline of a grade C. Higher ability and gifted students benefit from the Aim Higher programme to raise their aspirations for future career choices. Students enjoy a wide range of enrichment activities and after-school clubs, in addition to the vocational courses on offer, which includes construction and ICT as part of the academy's specialist status.

The academy's outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that students, particularly those who are potentially vulnerable, can feel safe and well cared for and thus achieve to their full potential. The exemplary work of dedicated professionals, such as the family support worker and pastoral teams, provides influential and valued support to some students and their families when facing complex issues and difficulties. The measures taken by the academy to improve attendance have been recognised locally and nationally as being rigorous and effective, although not yet resulting in significant improvement towards national average figures. Good advice and guidance for students, including those in the sixth form, helps them to make choices for their futures.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders, managers and all staff share a strong sense of purpose and a belief that the academy's students will achieve the best they can and achieve challenging and ambitious targets in their academic and personal development. Self-evaluation and strategic planning are very well informed by senior and middle leaders' comprehensive monitoring of provision. Detailed analyses of the performance and circumstances of different individuals or groups of learners contribute to ensuring equality of opportunity for students. Any forms of discrimination are tackled well. Leaders and managers target training and support accurately and the impact can be seen, for example, in the good and improving quality of teaching and students' progress. Distributed leadership and a collegial approach are evident and staff morale is high.

The governing body fulfils its statutory duties and is helping to shape the future direction of the academy. 'Link governor' roles are being planned and the governing body satisfactorily holds leaders to account for the academy's performance. It is aware of the need to ensure that governors can be more involved in developing success criteria by which the impact of their actions can be evaluated. Community cohesion is actively promoted in the academy and the local schools with which it is involved. The academy acknowledges that there is more to do in evaluating students' wider understanding of the three strands of community cohesion: religious, ethnic and socio-economic.

The academy demonstrates good practice in ensuring that safeguarding requirements are fully met. Staff and governors have appropriate and regular training in child protection matters. All procedures and policies are in place and in some aspects are particularly comprehensive; for example, the collaboration with key agencies to support and monitor students in vulnerable or difficult circumstances.

The academy engages with a comprehensive range of partnerships that contribute effectively to student's learning and well-being. Some of these, such as the involvement of the Principal and other staff in consultancy activities, bring in additional revenue. This is used well in enabling the academy to provide small group intervention classes to boost achievement. The sixth form partnership with two other local schools enables the academy to offer a wider range of courses and accreditation.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

At this early stage of its development the overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory. It is a new and vibrant sixth form that is appreciated by students and is developing at a good pace. Examination results at AS level are broadly in line with the national average for students with similar prior attainment, the academy's tracking systems indicate that the first A level results will also reflect satisfactory progress. The strong collaboration with other local schools and colleges ensures that students have a wide choice of courses available to them. Retention rates are high; very few choose to leave before completing their studies at the academy.

The good guidance that they receive as they select courses continues as they progress through the sixth form and students are well prepared for entry into higher education or employment. Over half of the current Year 13 students have received offers for university courses.

Teaching at sixth form level is consistently good or outstanding and students are motivated and enthusiastic as a result of this. They say that they can readily approach their teachers for extra support and advice. Teachers have welcomed the challenge of teaching at this level, they share good practice and the evidence from lesson observations is that students are progressing well and standards are rising.

Leadership and management of the sixth form are good. The Vice Principal with responsibility for the sixth form and the non-teaching sixth form ambassador provide clear direction and are well supported by a team of tutors who are also ambitious for their students.

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These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents or carers who returned the inspection questionnaire are positive about the work of the academy.

A very small minority did not agree that the academy helps their child to have a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors found that there are good opportunities for students to develop their understanding of safe and healthy choices. The extent of the provision of physical education and the availability of a selection of healthy foods contribute to this, as does the availability of advice from the school nurse.

A small minority of parents or carers do not think that the academy deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that the academy has effective systems for managing behaviour and that the behaviour of students, particularly in lessons, is good overall.

A small minority of parents or carers do not feel that the academy takes account of their suggestions and concerns, although it was not made clear what led them to hold this view. Inspection evidence showed that communication with parents and carers is good. They are provided with appropriate information in newsletters, reports and at parents' evenings. The academy staff are accessible should parents wish to get in touch to discuss any issues related to their children. However, inspectors did agree that the academy could do more to ensure that the views of parents and carers are more regularly sought.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Anne's Academy 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 198 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 647 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	30	110	56	22	11	5	3
The school keeps my child safe	73	37	105	53	11	6	5	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	86	43	98	49	9	5	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	87	44	94	47	13	7	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	86	43	97	49	10	5	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	71	36	106	54	16	8	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	26	115	58	23	12	6	3
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)	68	34	106	54	6	3	4	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	67	34	112	57	10	5	4	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	68	34	94	47	20	10	13	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	26	104	53	24	12	10	5
The school is led and managed effectively	82	41	97	49	10	5	8	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	87	44	93	47	11	6	7	4

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.



17 May 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of St Anne's Academy, Manchester, M24 6XN

The inspection team would like to thank those of you who gave up some time to tell us about life at the academy, and for the welcome we received. It was helpful to talk with many of you in lessons and around the academy, too, because what you had to say helped us form our views. We have judged that the academy is good overall and that some aspects of its work are outstanding. This is because you make good and sometimes excellent progress to reach standards that are broadly in line with national averages. Some of the academy's particular strengths include:

- the outstanding vision and work of the Principal, senior Vice Principal and all other leaders and managers in their commitment to improving the academy
- consistently good teaching, especially at Key Stage 4 and the sixth form
- the way in which staff know each of you as individuals, helping the academy to provide you with outstanding levels of care, guidance and support
- your good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning in most lessons

It was interesting that in the 98 student questionnaires we received, almost 20% of you felt that behaviour wasn't good and that you didn't enjoy school, which is surprising as almost all of you agreed that you feel safe, adults care about you and that you learn a lot in lessons! It is a shame that a few of you are holding back your progress by not attending regularly enough, so it would be really helpful if everyone made the same effort to attend every day. The academy already has plans to make further improvements, and we have suggested two particular targets to help with these:

- Make sure that more students are able to take on responsibilities and play a fuller part in the life of the academy and its wider community. This will also help to further develop your key skills for future lives and careers.
- Continue to develop the sixth form so that outcomes improve further to match the good quality of provision and leadership.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marguerite McCloy

Her Majesty's Inspector

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