

School inspection report

Date: 23 to 25 January 2024

St Anthony's Prep School

90 Fitzjohn's Avenue

Hampstead

London NW3 6NP

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. Leaders, supported by effective teaching, enable pupils to be academically successful, particularly in English and mathematics, and gain entry to a range of secondary schools, many of which are academically selective.
2. The school's Catholic ethos permeates all areas of school life. Leaders reflect and plan so that the school's religious foundation provides support and guidance to the pupils and the sense of community and charity are embedded in all activities. This ethos is interwoven through the personal development of the pupils and is supported by the rigorous pastoral systems introduced by school leaders.
3. The curriculum is mostly well developed with effective monitoring by leaders. However, the creative side of the curriculum, including music and art, is less well-established meaning that pupils do not develop skills and knowledge as successfully as they do in other areas of the curriculum.
4. Safeguarding arrangements are secure throughout the school. Leaders are well trained and have developed a positive culture within the school where pupils feel safe and secure. Priority is placed on ensuring the views and opinions of pupils are heard.
5. Governance oversight is effective, particularly in relation to all aspects of health and safety, fire and first aid. Leaders ensure that pupils are well supervised at all times of the school day.
6. Teachers' long-term curriculum planning is secure. However, leaders have not ensured that planning to meet the needs of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), at the top end of the school, sufficiently reflects individual learning styles and teaching approaches. As a result, progress for these pupils sometimes slows.
7. Pupils display a real passion for learning and strive to give of their best. This is fostered from an early age in the early years, and pupils successfully build on their achievements as they move through the school.
8. Pupils are socially mature and relish the opportunities of learning and playing together. Pupils appreciate the cultural diversity within the school and levels of mutual respect are high. Leaders create an environment where everyone is valued. The value of others is promoted through specific curriculum content, focused assemblies and meaningful links with the school's surrounding areas.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders and managers should ensure that:

- the creative subjects, such as art and music, offer the same breadth and depth of opportunity as other areas of the curriculum, to broaden pupils' knowledge and skills
- in the senior part of the school, teaching consistently considers the needs of pupils who have SEND.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. Leaders create a happy and harmonious working environment which supports the wellbeing of pupils. Leaders demonstrate a comprehensive approach to ensuring that school policies and procedures are implemented effectively. This is achieved through clear direction and guidance, in aspects such as safeguarding and in the early years, ensuring that staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Governors liaise effectively with school leaders and value input from relevant stakeholders. They use their own surveys to effectively shape school development. They effectively draw on the skills base from within the linked group of schools, thus further strengthening the impact of leaders. For example, schools within the group share teaching and learning initiatives.
10. Leaders are knowledgeable about all aspects of both pupil development and matters relating to aspects such as health, safety, and safeguarding. A healthy balance of guided direction from school leaders and allowing staff to bring their own style and expertise to the teaching, facilitates positive outcomes for pupils. This is true of both their academic achievement and their personal growth. This means that pupils trust those educating them, speaking confidently about how they are understood and motivated by their teachers. There is a suitable accessibility plan in place which pays appropriate attention to both physical access around the site and to pupils accessing the curriculum successfully.
11. Leaders have developed a clear structure for growth and development and have built in positive monitoring strategies, which enable both pupils and teachers to have a voice in development planning. This consultative process has brought about change such as contributing ideas for the dining hall menu and changes in the marking and assessment policy. All aspects of educational provision are reviewed and monitored through regular learning observations, the focus of which is transparent to staff. However, the planned development of the creative curriculum is not as well advanced. Insufficient focus on staffing, monitoring, time and resources means that pupils' knowledge and skills in subjects such as music and art are less well developed. Leaders, including governors, understand the school's strengths and areas for development. They have correctly identified priorities for improvement.
12. Leaders have a clear understanding of risk in its widest context and many steps have been taken to ensure that risk is mitigated to keep pupils safe and secure. This is evident from the physical management of crossing a very busy road to the less visible risks such as the safer recruitment process.
13. Pupils learn about the differences between people and are encouraged to respect those differences. Due attention is given to The Equality Act within a denominational setting. For example, topics such as same sex marriage and gender equality are dealt with appropriately.
14. Leaders handle any complaints through a well-documented complaints procedure, and they ensure that all the information that is required for both current parents and parents of prospective pupils is readily available on the informative school website. Parents receive regular detailed reports on their child's attainment and progress.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

15. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

16. In the early years, leaders' oversight enables children to develop a range of skills. Children learn the sounds that letters make through a structured and systematic programme, developing their early reading skills. They learn to hold pencils correctly, supporting their correct letter formation. Children listen well to stories and teachers' instructions, developing their communication and language skills. They respond well to teachers' expertly crafted questions and prompts. Children learn to recognise, name and understand numbers because teaching is well structured and planned to meet each child's stage of development. This approach provides firm foundations that are built on as the children move through the school. Leaders place great emphasis on children being focused and happy which they see as vital ingredients, alongside teacher expertise, for effective learning. Teachers in the early years plan and set up their rooms and outside areas with interesting and stimulating activities to meet the needs of the children.
17. Staff across the school use assessments and data to maximise outcomes for pupils by successfully identifying underperformance and putting in place effective support strategies. As a result, pupils achieve well. The curriculum for all ages is suitable, providing valuable experiences in all areas of learning. However, pupils' knowledge and skills in subjects such as music and art are less well developed.
18. Teachers in the junior house use assessment information to build on prior learning and leaders help teachers develop their teaching to meet pupils' needs. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their learning, which further embeds their developing knowledge and skills. Teaching assistants are used effectively in the junior house. They make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and progress. They also support behaviour management, which maximises learning opportunities. In mathematics, the skilled support, guidance and encouragement of the staff help pupils to embed learning, for example, when focusing on number bonds to 100 before moving on to more abstract concepts of money.
19. Pupils in the junior house who have SEND are identified and relevant information about their specific needs is shared with staff. Focused learning initiatives and careful planning help embed basics skills for these pupils. Older pupils in the senior house who have SEND are identified effectively but are not always given appropriate support to help them learn well. Planning is not consistently adapted to meet their specific needs. Pupils with EAL develop their fluency in English through effective support provided by both class and subject teachers and by guidance from leaders in this area.
20. Teachers across the whole school consistently deliver a variety of well-planned and stimulating lessons that draw upon a wide range of teaching techniques. This allows pupils to make good progress. Teachers deliver their subject matter with pace and ensure maximum pupil participation. Teachers set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and manage behaviour well. Pupils perform well in tests and competitions and regularly secure places at highly competitive senior schools. Teachers' firm subject knowledge is used well to engage pupils' interest in lessons.
21. Leaders provide a wide range of additional activities for pupils to develop their physical, academic and creative skills. For example, pupils develop skilful moves in fencing and develop their understanding of symbiotic relationships in a science club. These activities are age-appropriate and help to develop pupils' knowledge alongside their independence and social skills.

22. Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They describe and share their work with enthusiasm, as shown in the passion with which they describe and shared their work. They take great pride in the engaging way their work is presented. Pupils display a positive work ethic, wanting to please their teachers and do their best, which strengthens their achievements. Teachers provide useful feedback to pupils, which helps them to understand how to improve their work.
23. Leaders ensure that fundamental British values are actively promoted with full integration into the curriculum, including in PSHE through a series of well-structured activities. Pupils understand key concepts, such as democracy, through events such as a visit from the local Member of Parliament to hear about politics in action.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

- 24. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

25. Leaders demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of risk. Measures are in place to ensure that pupils remain physically safe throughout the school day. This ranges from effective site security and controlled entry to the school premises to the rigorous approach to supervision as pupils move through their staggered lunchtime to different sites across a busy road. Premises and accommodation are suitable for the range of activities and the age of the children. Governors have effective oversight of all health and safety matters and check suitable implementation of policies and procedures.
26. There is a clear protocol for the provision of first aid. Displays identify staff that have first aid training so that staff and pupils know who to contact if medical attention is required. Procedures, protocols and training are also monitored in the wider context of health and safety and any concerns are acted on quickly when they arise.
27. Staff promote good behaviour and deal effectively with bullying when it occurs. Pupils and staff understand and follow the behaviour policy. Pupils are appropriately supervised and feel safe and supported by staff. Healthy meals are provided for pupils with a suitable amount of choice. Pupils' moral and spiritual understanding is developed within the school's Catholic ethos which permeates school life. For example, the school chaplain leads assemblies, masses and retreats to encourage pupils to reflect and deepen their spiritual knowledge, sense of self and emotional wellbeing. Leaders have instigated a rewards system of merits and colours to celebrate success and help build pupils' self-belief and confidence.
28. The range of clubs and activities on offer gives pupils the opportunity to try something new as well as understanding what makes them feel content and gives them a sense of wellbeing and provides physical challenge. Pupils enjoy the collaboration of jazz club and respond positively to the mental challenges presented by chess and computer coding, where one pupil was able to act as 'expert' and guide their friends. Pupils also benefit from further academic challenge whilst enjoying the company of their friends, in clubs such as those relating to science and world cultures. These clubs also allow pupils to collaborate with their peers in a relaxed environment.
29. Children in the early years understand the impact of relaxation and breathing, including after a busy playtime in windy conditions. These techniques help the children settle quickly to other activities as they feel calm and refocused.
30. Leaders actively promote the pupils' mental and emotional wellbeing. Pupils benefit from taking time in the wellbeing room which provides a calming and relaxed space and from the valued support given to them by a counsellor, if required.
31. Admissions and attendance procedures are clear and thorough. Staff are alert to the risk of children missing from education. They monitor pupils' attendance and report school leavers and joiners to the local authority to mitigate this risk.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

32. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

33. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and are respectful towards staff and each other. This is reflected in both calm classrooms and happy break times when pupils interact positively and enjoy each other's company. Pupils listen well to their peers and teachers, enabling a productive working environment during lessons. Pupils are polite and helpful. They understand the importance of treating others well, building social skills that prepare them well for life beyond school.
34. Pupils understand that they can make a difference and be active, kind and tolerate members of the community. They are actively involved in raising money for different charities. By supporting key initiatives, pupils broaden their global knowledge and humanitarian outlook. For example, by supporting a healthy diet for children in Liberia. A charity update keeps all members of the community in touch with fundraising initiatives. Pupils develop effective economic understanding through such fundraising activities, often initiated by the school council, where they can plan courses of action to maximise profit from events.
35. Parents are actively involved in school life and strengthen the sense of community that exists. Leaders enable their active involvement through initiatives such as consultation around the delivery of important areas, such as RSE, and careers week, which gives parents the opportunity to be directly involved in school life by sharing their work experiences with the pupils. Community ties maintain these successful working partnerships, such as through a wellbeing newsletter, which gives tips to parents about managing the health and wellbeing of their families. Leaders actively promote the links with the school's immediate environment, strengthening the pupils' sense of belonging as well as developing their understanding of their neighbourhood. They visit local churches, parks and sports and games facilities.
36. Leaders promote a careers week from Years 1 to 8. Pupils hear presentations about different roles and occupations, to help them understand what opportunities will be available to them as they move through their education and into adulthood. This helps them to actively contribute and respond positively to the challenges of adult life. Leaders are mindful that pupils see both men and women in different roles to challenge any gender stereotyping. They give pupils the knowledge that everyone can be successful and that they have choices about what path they may choose to take. Leaders encourage participation from former pupils who share their successes, challenges and stories with the pupils at the school. This makes the next steps meaningful and relevant to pupils of all ages.
37. Fundamental British values are actively promoted, and pupils develop a good understanding of aspects such as democracy and the rule of law. They visit public institutions and hear from speakers who visit the school. For example, from local universities, presenting thought-provoking themes such as what is fact and might be fake in the news. The school runs its own election for head boy which deepens pupils' understanding of the democratic process. Hustings give pupils the opportunity to convey their thoughts and beliefs and for others to decide on the most suitable person to take up this important post of responsibility. The school's diverse range of cultural backgrounds enriches the sense of community and belonging where every individual is valued.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

38. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

39. Leaders have established a positive safeguarding culture. Staff implement appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures. Staff, including those with specific safeguarding responsibilities, and governors, are appropriately trained through both online modules and face to face meetings. Safeguarding leads liaise effectively with local safeguarding partners. Staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to report any concerns should they arise. Staff feel supported and guided by safeguarding leads within the school.
40. Safeguarding leads from the school and the governing body meet regularly and all board members are involved in an annual review of the school's arrangements. This enables appropriate support and challenge as required. There are appropriate mechanisms through which pupils can voice their opinions and concerns, including in various councils. Pupils can also talk with their form tutors and other staff such as the counsellor and chaplain. Pupils feel that they connect well with the staff who have taken the time to understand them as individuals. Pupils feel safe and well cared for at the school.
41. Staff have safeguarding training when they join the school. They learn about the school's policies and procedures, including the code of conduct and the procedures for whistleblowing. Staff are trained to understand the dangers of extremism and the risks of radicalisation in the context of the school. The safer recruitment process ensures that all appropriate checks are carried out on staff prior to their appointment to the school.
42. Leaders ensure that there is a named person for leading safeguarding within the early years and that there is a suitable policy on the use of mobile devices within the settings.
43. Care is taken to ensure that pupils understand the importance of healthy relationships and how they will be able to keep themselves safe and happy as they move through life.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 44. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	St Anthony's Prep School
Department for Education number	202/6181
Address	St Anthony's Prep School 90 Fitzjohn's Avenue London NW3 6NP
Phone number	0207 431 1066
Email address	pahead@stanthonysprep.co.uk
Website	stanthonysprep.org.uk
Proprietor	Inspired Education Group
Chair of governors	Mr Nicholas Wergan
Headteacher	Mr Richard Berlie
Age range	2 and a half to 13
Number of pupils	269
Date of previous inspection	12 June 2023

Information about the school

45. St Anthony's Prep School is a Roman Catholic day school for male pupils. It has been owned and managed by the Inspired Education Group since 2023 and shares a board of governors in common with the group's other schools. Accommodation is on two sites within close walking distance of one another. Pupils from Reception to Year 3 attend the junior house. Those in Years 4 to 8 are in the senior house.
46. The coeducational Nursery opened in September 2023.
47. The school has identified 73 pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). One pupil in the school has an education, health and care (EHC) plan.
48. English is an additional language for 54 pupils.
49. The school states its aims are to provide high-quality education in a caring, supportive and Catholic environment, infused by Christ's Gospel, in order that each pupil is able to develop fully as an individual, well-adjusted to the wider community.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

23 to 25 January 2024

50. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

51. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chief executive officer uk
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- visits to the learning support area and facilities for physical education
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

52. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

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