

St Anthony's School for Girls

Ivy House, North End Road, Golders Green, London NW11 7SX

Inspection dates

7–9 November 2017

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
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- In a very short space of time, the proprietors, governors and headteacher have established an outstanding school which is exceptionally well led.
- Leaders have made sure that all the independent school standards and statutory early years requirements are met in full.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding and leads to rapid progress in all subjects. Teachers provide tailored activities to challenge pupils in their thinking and learning. Occasionally, there is a lack of challenge in mathematics, particularly for the most able pupils.
- The curriculum inspires pupils to want to find out more. It promotes pupils' achievement and personal development strongly. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps in education.
- Pupils' outstanding attitudes to learning have an exceptional impact on their progress in lessons.
- The headteacher has fostered excellent partnerships with staff, pupils and parents. All are united in their quest for excellence and feel immensely proud of being part of St Anthony's School.
- Pupils are thoughtful, mature and respectful. This contributes to a calm, relaxed but purposeful atmosphere in school.
- Pupils feel safe and are kept safe because adults know pupils exceptionally well. Adults are vigilant, detecting any potential concerns swiftly.
- Children in Reception Year also make very strong progress. Assessments are used precisely to identify children's next steps. Children learn new skills at a rapid rate. They also make great gains in their personal development. Strong relationships enable children to settle quickly into the school's routines.

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?

- Make sure that children and pupils, especially the most able, deepen their understanding in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders have ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- The headteacher has quickly won the respect of governors, staff, parents and pupils. Her unswerving drive to secure an outstanding education for all pupils is shared by the small team of dedicated staff. There is a clear vision of 'no limits to what pupils can achieve'. Staff morale is high.
- The headteacher has secured and sustained high-quality teaching. The appraisal cycle sets targets for individual teachers to improve their practice. Systematic monitoring provides incisive feedback to teachers with pointers for improvement, to which they respond readily. Teachers are also highly reflective about their own practice and keen to sustain pupils' high levels of involvement and rapid progress.
- Potential leaders are quickly identified. Two teachers are currently undertaking middle leadership training. This is set to strengthen the school's capacity for improvement still further.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and reliable. The headteacher's judgements are cross-referenced with those of governors, both of whom have educational backgrounds. As a result, the right priorities are planned for effectively.
- Assessments of pupils' progress have been validated by the local authority and moderated with other schools, both within the Alpha Plus Group and with other schools locally. Consequently, assessments are accurate and any pupil at risk of underachieving is quickly identified, with appropriate support put in place.
- The school provides an exciting and motivating curriculum. Specialist teachers, visits and visitors, together with the wide range of extra-curricular activities, enhance pupils' learning immensely. Learning is brought to life, capturing pupils' interest. As a result, there are high levels of participation and enjoyment. Pupils quickly become resilient learners.
- Both the curriculum and the extra-curricular activities, which include ballet, street dancing, French, Spanish and Latin, and coding in information and communication technology (ICT), to name but a few, enable pupils to pursue their talents and passions.
- The curriculum is used effectively to promote equality, tolerance and respect for differences. There are visits to different places of worship, including the local synagogue and Hindu temple. The wide range of ethnic backgrounds of pupils is continually celebrated. Teachers ensure that girls achieve well in traditionally male-dominated areas, including mathematics, science and technology. This all contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as preparing them for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils have good opportunities to work with the boys at the corresponding boys' school. Younger boys and girls play and work together regularly.

Governance

- Governance consists of the chief executive officer, a chair and vice-chair and a board of directors. Two directors have specific responsibility for education, safeguarding, governance and compliance. One director oversees the headteacher's appraisal. Directors make sure that they fulfil all their statutory responsibilities.
- Directors have an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They use regular, focused visits to check how well the school is performing. This review cycle enables governors to provide the headteacher with support and challenge in equal measure.
- Directors are well informed about the professional development needs of staff, including those of the headteacher. They promote and deliver effective collaborative working across schools in the group to share effective practice at both leadership and teaching levels.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding of pupils and their protection from any potential harm are central to the work of all leaders and staff.
- The high ratio of staff to pupils means that staff know pupils extremely well. Staff are keenly aware of any potential concerns or warning signs. Up-to-date safeguarding training means that they have a good understanding of what actions they need to take to safeguard pupils if and when required.
- Effective communication within school and, if necessary, with external agencies secures a timely response to keep pupils safe from harm.
- Leaders, including governors, fulfil their statutory responsibilities. All safeguarding policies use statutory frameworks to guide safeguarding procedures. The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website.
- Although there have been no concerns about staff conduct, staff are fully aware of the whistleblowing policy and what course of action they would need to take. Leaders also know whom to contact if any concerns were raised about a member of staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers have extensive teaching experience in a wide range of settings and excellent subject knowledge, with particular specialisms in English, mathematics, music, French and physical education.
- All teachers have very high expectations of their pupils. For example, teachers use technical vocabulary well to explain key concepts, thus extending pupils' vocabulary and understanding effectively.
- Work in pupils' books demonstrates how teachers consistently encourage pupils to produce their very best work. Presentation and handwriting are impeccable.
- The small number of pupils in each class means that teachers have incisive knowledge of each pupil's abilities. They regularly assess pupils' progress. Typically, teachers use

assessments to pitch work at the right level of challenge for all ability groups. When new pupils join the school during the school year, gaps in learning are quickly closed. As a result, all pupils gain skills, knowledge and understanding at a rapid rate.

- Teachers are adept at asking probing questions to extend pupils' vocabulary and thinking. They pick up on pupils' misconceptions and use these to consolidate and extend pupils' understanding at every opportunity.
- Teachers skilfully build on what pupils already know and can do, providing them with practical and visual cues to support their learning. This is particularly so in reading and writing. Teachers select books that capture pupils' imagination and secure sustained levels of engagement and pleasure in reading and writing.
- The systematic teaching of phonics in early years and in key stage 1 enables pupils to be confident, accurate and independent readers and writers.
- As a result of careful monitoring of standards by the headteacher, there has been a recent focus on strengthening pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills. This is speeding up pupils' progress in mathematics. Nonetheless, there remain some inconsistencies in the extent to which pupils are challenged in mathematics, especially the most able pupils.
- Thematic work is used well to develop and strengthen pupils' literacy and mathematical skills. For example, in science, pupils produce Venn diagrams to classify living and non-living things. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop key scientific skills, including predicting and drawing conclusions from their experiments.
- Pupils quickly gain skills in other areas of the curriculum, including in music. Observations of their first recorder lessons illustrates how pupils grasp musical notation quickly and begin to play the recorder with increasing fluency and accuracy.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are nurtured and well cared for by their teachers. This instils high levels of confidence and self-esteem. As a result, pupils are not afraid to try out new things or to ask questions. They relish 'having a go' at challenging tasks, which in turn develops their resilience and stamina.
- Strong relationships and specific activities in personal, social and health education lessons promote pupils' mental well-being effectively.
- Pupils know that if they have any worries, adults will listen to them; yoga is used to lower pupils' anxiety levels if required. Consequently, pupils are able to focus successfully on their learning, as well as to interact respectfully and thoughtfully with their friends and teachers.
- The school council elections enable pupils to explore what democracy means by voting for representatives. Trips, such as a visit to the Houses of Parliament and follow-up work, provide pupils with opportunities to think about how the United Kingdom is governed and the law of the land.
- Pupils' moral development is promoted very well. For example, they are taught about

inequalities and readily raise funds for national charities and for children abroad who do not have access to education.

- Pupils know about different forms of bullying. They have a good understanding of the impact of discrimination on people who are different. Pupils say that there is no bullying at the school and that everyone in school is a friend.
- Pupils know how to keep safe, including what constitutes appropriate behaviour and how to speak out if it is not.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct is exceptional. Staff consistently model high expectations for behaviour. As a consequence, pupils are self-disciplined, respectful and courteous at all times.
- Pupils learn about the key values that underpin friendship. As a result, they display maturity beyond their years, acting responsibly and with kindness to their friends and staff.
- To date there have been no significant behavioural incidents, including bullying.
- High attendance rates confirm that pupils love coming to school. Pupils take great pride in wearing their school uniform and appreciate everything the school offers them.
- Parents say that their children 'radiate' with happiness since starting at this school. They too are totally satisfied with the school's work.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- The school's assessment information demonstrates that, in 2016/17, children in Reception and pupils in Year 3 made at least good progress from average starting points. In some subjects, progress was excellent, including in reading, writing, music and physical education.
- The most able make strong progress in most respects. However, leaders rightly recognised that progress in mathematics, although good, was not as strong as in other subjects, with fewer pupils attaining greater depth. A specialist mathematics teacher was appointed in September 2017 and a new mathematics scheme is being rolled out in Years 1, 2, and 3. Work in books illustrates that there is now a good focus on developing pupils' problem-solving and investigative skills. As a result, pupils in all year groups, including the most able pupils, are beginning to deepen their learning in mathematics.
- Examples of pupils' work confirm that current pupils make strong and sustained progress in almost all subjects. Attainment across year groups is at least above the age-related expectations, and well above in reading and writing.
- Discussions with pupils and direct observations confirm that they are highly articulate learners who enjoy their lessons. Pupils have an outstanding work ethic.
- Pupils read regularly both in school and at home. They have a real love of reading and do so with fluency, good understanding and comprehension. For example, older pupils use sophisticated strategies to glean insight into characters' motivations and intentions.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- All of the statutory requirements are met in relation to the early years provision. There are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements.
- Children benefit from the same outstanding teaching and exciting practical activities as older pupils in school. High-quality resources and stimulating activities, both inside and outside the classroom, promote learning well. Each activity ensures that children learn new skills either on their own, with their friends or through direct guidance from the teacher.
- From broadly average starting points when children entered Reception in 2016, all children exceeded the early learning goals in reading, writing and number. Inspection observations confirm that children are currently making excellent progress, including in their personal development.
- The early years teacher has an excellent understanding of how young children learn best. She knows when to stand back and when to intervene in children's work to extend their vocabulary or to reinforce and deepen their learning.
- Children's individual needs, abilities and interests are understood exceptionally well by the teacher. Continual assessment of what children understand means that activities are tailored precisely to build on what they know and can do. Next steps in learning are carefully planned, securing strong progress in all areas of learning.
- Children work with sustained concentration, listening carefully to their teacher and to each other. They work well together, sharing and taking turns appropriately.
- Parents are well informed about their children's progress through informal discussions, regular newsletters and formal meetings.
- Staff ensure that children's welfare and safety are given top priority. Children are given opportunities to manage potential risks, including in the outdoor area, thus promoting their ability to work and play responsibly. All staff are trained in paediatric first aid.
- Children are well prepared to continue to succeed in Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	143037
DfE registration number	302/6008
Inspection number	10026629

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	26
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Alpha Plus Group Ltd
Chair	Sir John Ritblat
Headteacher	Laura Flannery
Annual fees (day pupils)	£17,865
Telephone number	0203 869 3070
Website	www.stanthonygirls.co.uk
Email address	laura.flannery@stanthonygirls.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school opened in September 2016, initially admitting up to 20 children in the Reception Year and 20 pupils in Year 3.
- In September 2017, pupils in Years 1, 2 and 4 joined the school. This rolling programme will continue until there are up to 280 pupils on roll from Reception to Year 6.
- At the time of the registration inspection in July 2016, the school was judged likely to meet all of the independent school standards. This is the school's first standard inspection.
- The school is part of the Alpha Plus Group Ltd, which in total has 20 other educational

settings, including nurseries, primary and secondary schools, as well as sixth-form colleges.

- The school is located in the London Borough of Barnet and overlooks Golders Hill Park. It was formerly home to the ballerina Anna Pavlova and to the London Jewish Cultural Centre.
- The premises have been refurbished and comprise two buildings. An annex, consisting of a small number of classrooms, is located close to the main building on the opposite side of the pupils' playground. There is a purpose-built hall and science laboratory.
- There are 26 pupils on roll currently, four of whom are Reception-aged children.
- There are no pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or children who are looked after by the local authority.
- St Anthony's School aims to 'provide high-quality education in a caring, supportive and Catholic environment, so that each pupil is able to develop fully as an individual, well-adjusted to the wider community'. The school welcomes girls of all faiths, cultures, races, nationalities and family backgrounds.
- The school was set up to complement the provision of another of the Alpha Plus Group schools, St Anthony's School for Boys.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place with one day's notice.
- The quality of teaching and learning was observed in a range of group activities. Almost all of these were joint observations with the headteacher.
- During visits to classrooms, the inspector reviewed pupils' work in a range of subjects and spoke with pupils about their learning.
- Pupils read to the inspector and shared their views of the school.
- A tour of the school's premises was undertaken with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, the early years teacher, parents and two governors.
- School documents, policies and records were scrutinised, including safeguarding information, records of pupils' progress, and behaviour and attendance records. The inspector also looked at school improvement planning and premises records.
- The responses of 19 parents to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were reviewed, as well as eight staff questionnaires. The inspector also looked at the school's own parent questionnaires.

Inspection team

Mary Hinds, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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