

Saint George's Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118876
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	362819
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Gale HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Modern (non-selective)
School category	Voluntary aided
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	1080
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Joe King
Headteacher	Anne Southgate
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2009
School address	Meadow Road Gravesend Kent DA11 7LS
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 34 lessons and observed 33 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of students, parents, governors and staff. The inspectors observed the schools work, and looked at the school development plan, curriculum plans, the schools tracking data showing students progress, teachers lesson plans, students work and the displays around the school. Evidence from the two previous monitoring inspections was also taken into account.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the schools work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

The quality of teaching and learning and teachers ability to plan interesting and engaging lessons matched well to the abilities of students.

The use of assessment to support learning, including teachers use of questioning, marking and assessment data.

The ability of leaders at all levels to evaluate and monitor provision across the school to bring about improvement.

The quality of provision and outcomes for students in the sixth form.

Information about the school

Saint Georges is a non-selective secondary school in an area with selective education and currently has more boys than girls. Nearly a third of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is above the national average. Most of these students have behavioural, emotional and moderate learning difficulties or are on the autistic spectrum. Around three quarters of students are from a White British heritage. The remainder are from minority ethnic groups, which is more than found in most schools, as is the percentage who speak English an additional language. The school has a growing number of students from Eastern Europe, many at the very early stages of learning English. The school has had specialist status for humanities since July 2005, specialising in English, history and religious education, and it is an extended school working in partnership with the local community. The school holds several awards in recognition of its work, among them an international award reflecting the ethos of its humanities status. The school has recently been awarded Artsmark Gold for the second time.

The school was inspected in December 2009 and placed in special measures. Inspectors visited the school to monitor progress in May 2010 and November 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Saint Georges is providing its students with a satisfactory, and rapidly improving, education.

The school is led well and governance is effective, which provides the school with good capacity for further improvement.

Systems for evaluating the performance of the school have been improved significantly. Leaders at all levels now have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in their areas of responsibility.

Students attainment has risen recently and is now broadly average. Robust tracking systems are in place. These are well used to ensure that any underachieving students receive effective intervention work. This and improved teaching have resulted in satisfactory and accelerating progress for students.

Effective leadership of teaching and learning has established a very accurate view of the quality of teachers work across the curriculum. School leaders have ensured that appropriate training, challenge and support are provided to improve teachers practice.

Teaching and the use of assessment to support learning are satisfactory and improving quickly. The best teaching is of a very high standard and being used to support practice in the school and across the local authority. However, teaching remains inconsistent across and within subjects, with weak and occasionally inadequate teaching in a small proportion of lessons.

Assessment has been a focus for improvement and good systems have been introduced to support learning. These work very well where they are fully embedded in teachers practice and students engage constructively with targets for improvement. However, this is yet to consistently be the case across the school.

Students behaviour has improved significantly and is now good. Good quality care, guidance and support combine well with many opportunities, including specialist school humanities days, to enhance students spiritual and cultural understanding. Students spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Students feel safe and the schools arrangements to ensure safeguarding of learners are effective.

The school is central to its community and knows it well. It makes a good contribution to enhancing community cohesion.

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Parents and carers are supportive of the school and a new Parent Committee is developing positive relationships with the school leadership. However, engagement is satisfactory overall as a minority of parents and carers are not actively involved in supporting their childrens education by, for example, attending parents evenings.

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets requirements. Vocational pathways have been developed but there are currently fewer that are of interest to girls, although the school has plans to remedy this. The school is aware that tutorial time is not always used well and this presents an opportunity for students to engage further with their subject targets to enhance progress. Programmes to develop literacy and numeracy across the school are now in place but at an early stage of development; they have not yet had time to demonstrate a significant impact on students outcomes.

The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is satisfactory and improving.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate progress to ensure attainment across the school is consistently at or above national averages, by:
 - sharing and consistently embedding the exemplary practice in teaching that exists in the school
 - sharpening and ensuring consistent use of the good assessment systems to improve students understanding of, and engagement with, their own progress
 - developing literacy and numeracy provision across the curriculum to support students progress.
 - Increase the proportion of parents and carers actively engaged with supporting their childrens learning.
 - Enhance the curriculum and students learning by:
 - making better use of tutorial time
 - providing more vocational courses that are of interest to girls.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Students enter the school with below-average attainment that is lowest for the youngest year groups. They make satisfactory progress to achieve standards that have risen recently to be broadly average by the time they reach Year 11. An increasing proportion of students attain their challenging targets. Students who have special needs and/or disabilities make progress in line with their peers. Students particularly enjoy, and make rapid progress in, lessons where they are actively involved in a variety of fast-paced tasks. These are increasingly available to students across the curriculum and good examples were observed by inspectors in several subjects. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson students enjoyed working together on collective memory. They took it in turns to gather information from visual images, reported back to their group and then discussed how the images related to the poems of other cultures. Good specialist support and improving

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teaching mean that those students for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory and improving progress.

Students behaviour is welcoming and considerate. They respect each other well and develop good relationships with staff and other students. Even in the small number of lessons where progress is inadequate because set work is too hard or too easy, students behaviour is passive rather than disruptive. Exclusions have fallen considerably. Students feel safe in school and understand and adopt safe practices well in their work, for example in science and technology lessons. Students are aware of and keen to adopt healthy lifestyles; they make a good contribution to the school and wider community through, for example, working as sports ambassadors to primary schools.

The school has worked hard to improve attendance and this has risen. It is now in line with national averages. Students develop workplace skills satisfactorily.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory, but improving rapidly. Good relationships exist between students and their teachers, who overwhelmingly demonstrate secure subject knowledge. New technology is starting to be used more effectively to support learning; for example, the use of tablet computers in mathematics. Additional adults in the classroom are usually deployed effectively to support the learning of students. In the majority of good and

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better lessons, which students report to be increasingly common, teachers use assessment information well to plan engaging tasks for the full range of learners. A variety of different learning opportunities are enjoyed and teachers frequently check learning gains against assessment criteria that are well understood by students. However, there is remaining inconsistency in the quality of teaching across and within subject areas. Very occasionally, lessons are inadequate because they are pitched at the wrong level. Work can be too difficult for students to understand or too easy to stretch more-able students. The minority of satisfactory lessons suffer from being too teacher led which results in students not developing sufficient independence in their learning.

Marking policy involves teachers commenting on strength, improvement and target (SIT) on assessed pieces of work. Students gain a good understanding of their current progress and areas for improvement from the process. However, this is not yet consistently embedded in all teachers practice. Questioning skills are variable, with the best teachers demonstrating exemplary practice.

The curriculum is under review; currently it matches the needs of most students. The Key Stage 4 curriculum provides some good vocational options, such as construction, but the uptake is mainly by boys. The school is currently developing plans to convert some facilities to provide more courses which appeal to both boys and girls, such as hairdressing. The schools humanities specialism and strong partnership links with, for example, the church enhance the curriculum and contribute well to students personal development and achievement. Extra-curricular provision and enrichment are strengths of the curriculum, with large take-up of a variety of sporting and other activities. The school recognises that tutorial time, while giving opportunities for spiritual thought, is not consistently well used.

Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. Vulnerable students are very well supported and feel safe in school. For example, good support for those at an early stage of learning English results in rapid progress in the development of their language skills. The school works consistently well with a wide range of agencies to support any of its students who are facing challenging circumstances.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

A determined headteacher, very well supported by her senior team, has focused sharply on improving weaker aspects of the schools provision. Accurate self-evaluation is based upon rigorous new systems that are effectively implemented by leaders at all levels. Clear priorities for improvement flow from evaluation, and all staff share a determination to

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secure them. Effective leadership of teaching and learning has seen them move from inadequate to satisfactory overall since the previous inspection. The majority of teaching is now good or better, with decreasing amounts that are satisfactory or inadequate. Challenging targets have been set for departments, staff and students, who are increasingly achieving them. Governors, particularly through the challenge committee, forge close links with departments and provide effective support and challenge. This is helping secure rapid improvement in the school. New appointments to the senior team have settled well to their roles and added capacity to improve. Accurate assessment and tracking data have enabled the school to clearly establish any groups of students who may be underperforming and begin intervention work to close the gaps. This has shown that certain groups of students perform less well than their peers in certain year groups but that there is no consistent pattern of underperformance across the school. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

Safeguarding procedures are robust and securing the safety of students. Staff are vetted carefully in accordance with current requirements. Effective partnership working is supporting improvements in outcomes for students, both academic and personal. The school is at the heart of its community, knows it well, and through an ethos of humanity and tolerance promotes community cohesion well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Sixth form

Students in the sixth form make expected progress from their starting points to achieve standards that are slightly below the national average. Progress has accelerated and is now good in most, but not all, subject areas. The number of students completing the courses they have chosen has improved from a relatively low base, and other outcomes, including attendance, show a positive trend. Students have good attitudes to their studies

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and respond well to the effective teaching they receive in most subject areas. Teaching in the sixth form is of similar quality to the main school, varying from satisfactory to outstanding in lessons. In the best lessons, very secure subject knowledge displayed by teachers coupled to a range of engaging learning activities leads to rapid progress for students. However, some teachers over direct lessons, leading to students working at the same pace regardless of ability. Students report that they are very well supported and that they have, and increasingly take, a good range of opportunities to participate in the leadership of the school. Plans for improving the sixth form are ambitious but realistic and leadership is good. The curriculum is under constant review, with an increasing number of courses being offered, including extra vocational options. Parents and carers report that an increasing number of their children are choosing to stay on in the sixth form. This is due to effective transition arrangements coupled to good relationships and the improving standards of attainment their children enjoy in the main school.

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	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



24 March 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Saint George's Church of England School, Gravesend DA11 7LS

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to inspectors when we recently visited your school. Here are our main inspection findings.

Your school is satisfactory. Overall, students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress.

Care, guidance and support are good. The school looks after you very well. As a result, you feel safe and healthy and are able to contribute well to the school, developing good spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

The school is good at monitoring your progress carefully to ensure that extra help is provided should you fall behind your challenging targets.

Students learning English for the first time receive good specialist support to help improve their skills.

Your behaviour has improved significantly since the last inspection. You behave well in lessons, normally concentrating hard, and you behave considerately towards each other around the site.

The sixth form is satisfactory and improving, providing an increasing number of you with an appropriate route to higher education.

To help ensure that all of you make consistently good progress we have asked school leaders to improve the quality of education you receive by:

Ensuring that all your teachers deliver lessons as good as the best and that the school develops good quality literacy and numeracy provision across the curriculum to support your learning.

Making sure that the schools assessment systems, including SIT marking, are consistently employed by your teachers and that you actively engage with the targets set.

Engaging all of your parents in supporting your learning and progress.

Making better use of tutorial time to support your learning and providing girls with more vocational courses in Key Stage 4.

You can help by always being in school when you are able, focusing strongly on your learning in class and responding to teachers comments on your work.

Yours sincerely

Peter Gale

Her Majesty's Inspector

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