

# St Katherine's School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109317
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	356525
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 May 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Smith HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	910
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	130
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Barry Toogood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stephanie Quayle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 May 2008
<b>School address</b>	Pill Road Pill Bristol BS20 0HU
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. They visited 38 lessons, taught by 38 teachers and held meetings with staff, students and governors. They observed the school's work, interrogated the school's assessment records and looked at the minutes of the meetings of the governing body. They also considered aspects of community work, the minutes of meetings with the School Improvement Partner, faculty evaluations and school action plans and evaluations. They also scrutinised 243 parent and carer questionnaires, 75 staff questionnaires and 160 student questionnaire

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

- The success of the school in raising standards in mathematics, the sixth form and in GCSE courses.
- The accuracy of the schools self-evaluation linked to students' outcomes.
- The impact of leaders and managers, at all levels, in improving the quality of students' learning.

## Information about the school

St Katherine's is a smaller than average rural school with the majority of its students coming across the border from nearby Bristol. While the number of students attending the school has fallen since the time of its previous inspection, it is oversubscribed for the Year 7 intake in 2011. Most students are of White British heritage and the proportion of students whose first language is not English is well below average. The percentage of students known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The specially resourced provision for special educational needs for 18 students with physical disabilities is due to close in September 2011. At present there are no students attending the unit.

The school became a science college in 2003. In 2009 it was identified as a high performing specialist school, being awarded a second specialist area of applied learning and becoming a lead school for gifted and talented children. The school has recently taken control of the newly built block to deliver the hospitality diploma and was the first school to gain the gold award from the Food for Life Partnership.

**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 Katherine's is a good school that provides a good quality of education with outstanding provision for students' care, guidance and support. This is particularly evident for students whose circumstances make them more vulnerable and also in raising the aspirations and chances for individuals who may have left school aged 16 with low academic qualifications. The school community is extremely harmonious and students were keen to let inspectors know how they enjoy school as well as saying they feel extremely safe and well cared for. Links with parents and carers are fostered extremely well and they are highly supportive, as are links with the local community and the way in which students can influence the work of the school.

The headteacher is highly ambitious for the school and is well supported by the senior leadership team. They have a clear drive to continue to improve the quality of education and the life chances of the students. There are well established systems to evaluate the work of faculties and the school. However, the evaluations do not always take sufficient account of all of the outcomes and at times the judgements are too generous. In the sixth form, strong leadership has brought about significant improvements to the provision and results are starting to rise. In Key Stage 4, overall standards are above average. Standards in mathematics, which had been low, have improved steadily so that now achievement is average. These demonstrate a good capacity to improve.

Students make good progress through a combination of good teaching, a curriculum which meets their needs well and outstanding care, guidance and support. A highlight of lessons, and of the work of the school, is the excellent relationships between staff and students. Students respond well in lessons, make a good contribution to their own learning and their behaviour is good. Their knowledge of healthy lifestyles is excellent and students take personal responsibility for their own well-being. They enjoy school and show mature attitudes.

The school utilises its specialist status well. Subject leaders have been successful in providing additional support and challenge for gifted and talented students, including the production of the 'G&T eye' magazine to support students and their parents and carers. There are also very well co-ordinated plans in place so that each faculty can support the common theme of growing together. Many subject areas incorporate applied learning courses at both Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. These courses are highly effective in engaging students. Those studying for the hospitality diploma say they enjoy working in their highly impressive facilities. There are excellent links with external agencies and partners to raise aspirations and to extend opportunities for students. There are good systems in place to ensure all faculties and subjects consider literacy elements within their lessons. However, there are limited opportunities for students to improve their

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mathematics by working on realistic and relevant problems in a variety of different subjects.

Members of the governing body work well with senior leaders to set the direction of the school and to hold it to account. They have worked effectively with the school's leaders to ensure that the large budget deficit accrued six years ago has systematically reduced so that the budget is balanced. The school provides good value for money.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Continue to raise achievement in mathematics by:
  - ensuring students are consistently challenged to make good progress in lessons
  - planning and delivering coherent opportunities for students to use their numerical skills across different areas of the curriculum.
- Continue to develop evaluations at faculty and school level by ensuring they take greater account of students' outcomes.

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

**2**

Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. Overall results have been consistently well above average but attainment in mathematics has been low for a number of years. Attainment in English is average. The school's data and results that students have already achieved, shows that standards in mathematics are likely to be close to average this year. Progress is good and students with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support to make similar rates of progress as their peers.

During the inspection, students made good progress in lessons. This was because in many lessons, students were engaged and enjoyed opportunities to work in groups. Behaviour is good when students are engaged and enthusiastic in lessons and want to achieve. However, there are occasions when students are compliant or off task because they are not fully motivated. Behaviour around school is good and students are courteous to visitors.

Responses to their questionnaire show that just about all students feel extremely safe and enjoy coming to school. Their excellent social skills and mutual respect for each other is very clear when walking around the site. Many students take part in activities to help them keep fit and have a very good understanding of how to keep healthy, both physically and mentally, especially when dealing with the stresses of adolescence or examinations. Students report that the very few incidents of bullying are dealt with immediately and effectively.

Students develop a good understanding of moral issues. For example, one class was observed discussing the issues dealing with animal exploitation. Good inter-personal and social skills are strengths within the sixth form. Students consider spiritual elements within lessons and also reflect upon these issues on school visits, for instance the group who visited Auschwitz as part of a history visit. Students make a very good contribution the life of the school. Their views are used to support the school's faculty evaluations and the head boy and girl are members of the governing body. Students consider the impact of other cultures within many lessons.

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The school has done well to halve the proportion of students who take a large amount of time off school and has improved attendance to above average. Attendance would have been higher than the present figures if the school had not remained open for a small number of students during the heavy snow when many other schools closed and the buses which bring students to school were not running. The use of applied courses ensures that students are well prepared for their futures, with very few failing to go on to education, employment or training.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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 good with some outstanding practice. Staff make good use of electronic whiteboards to engage students, including the use of video clips. Teachers have good subject knowledge which engages students. This is evident in the applied courses for example where recent relevant professional experience is invaluable in demonstrating how to work in an industry standard kitchen. Well-focused questioning is used to extend students' learning, although this is not consistent across all lessons. Marking is often constructive, but at times it does not provide detailed and specific feedback as to how well students are doing and how they could improve. In some books work has not been marked very frequently.

The curriculum meets the needs, interests and aspirations of students well. There are clear pathways for students to follow with opportunities to take GCSE examinations before

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the end of Year 11. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors and well-received enrichment days. A large number of students enjoy clubs and activities at lunchtimes and after school.

Students whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those who are looked after are excellently supported and their needs are well met, often including very good working with a variety of external agencies. The very focused support for students with poor attendance has meant that attendance rates have risen. Those who previously did not attend well are now making a good contribution within school. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Students say that they are very well informed and supported prior to starting school in Year 7, and when they make choices for the next phase of their education or work.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear vision of how the school is to develop and is rightly ambitious for its continued improvement. Staff share this vision and ambition and are highly motivated in continuing to implement improvements within the school. All members of staff who submitted a questionnaire said they were proud to be a member of the school and the vast majority said it was well led. This is testament to how effective the leadership has been in motivating and supporting staff. Middle leaders evaluate the work of their departments and then work to bring about identified improvements. The school has excellent arrangements with external agencies including working with higher education institutions to raise the aspirations of students from the start of their time in school to those in the sixth form. External agencies also support many of the courses for example; the sixth form forensic science group enjoyed helping to solve a crime at a local university. Parents and carers are regularly asked for their views on proposed changes. The work of the two parent support advisers is well received by parents and carers when necessary or requested.

The head boy and girl are members of the governing body which is supportive of the school through its well defined and effective committees. The school has clear plans to promote community cohesion, felt most in the cohesive community it promotes. However, the impact of this work is not fully evaluated to pinpoint where further improvements are possible. Safeguarding procedures ensure the safety of students and the school has ensured that all permanent staff know how to proceed if any problems arise. The inclusive nature of the school, together with a thorough analysis of examination data, including information for those students known to be eligible for free school meals, and the take-up

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of extra-curricular activities, has enabled the school to ensure good equality of opportunity.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Sixth form

The majority of students make good progress in the sixth form. While there is some variability between qualifications, progress ranges from excellent for the BTEC level 3 courses to satisfactory. Support for students returning to resit level 2 courses is a strength. The school is happy to take on previous underachievers and give them space to mature and improve academically. Students taking these courses achieve well above national averages.

Good retention and attendance rates demonstrate positive attitudes, and the school supports students well by raising their aspirations so that many of them go on to study at higher education establishments. Students take responsibility for their own learning and work profitably with their peers. They develop strong leadership and teamwork skills through the considerable contribution they make to the school community as volunteers, peer mentors and ambassadors.

The quality of teaching is good. It is notably strong in the applied subjects, where business links are used well to help students relate their studies to the world of work. The curriculum includes a wide range of level 3 courses and the school is expanding the number courses to ensure an even better match to students' needs and aspirations. Opportunities for enrichment are excellent. Outstanding care, guidance and support includes inputs from tutors, external careers advisers and specialist staff. Students are set challenging targets which form the basis for academic monitoring and personal interviews, and a high level of support is given to any student who is failing to the school's high expectations.



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A new leadership team has acted swiftly to review outcomes and provision in depth. Close consultation with staff and students has led to well considered changes, although many of these have yet to impact fully on outcomes. Sixth form leaders know their students well. They are proactive in the way they support inclusion, for example in obtaining funding to ensure students are not disadvantaged in their participation in enrichment programmes or in access to transport. The students themselves have a leadership team with defined roles and elections. One of the areas where this team has had a particular impact is in the development of a successful outreach programme for students who work with lower year groups.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

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

## Views of parents and carers

There were a larger proportion of responses than normally seen from a school of this size. Responses from parents and carers were positive, with the very large majority saying that their child enjoyed school. The very large majority of responses showed a high degree of satisfaction with the school. Parents and carers also commented on how well the school had supported their child. One comment, reflecting others, said: 'I am really pleased with my child's progress. St Katherine's is an excellent school and I would recommend it to anyone.'

A very small proportion of responses identified particular issues. Poor behaviour in a few classes was raised as an issue by a small proportion. The inspection team found behaviour to be good, although they were aware from students that there are very rare incidents weaker behaviour.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Katherine's School 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 243 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 910 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	97	40	134	55	11	5	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	108	44	131	54	3	1	1	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	98	40	132	54	10	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	96	40	134	55	11	5	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	102	42	133	55	7	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	24	156	64	25	10	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	87	36	144	59	11	5	0	0
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)	96	40	125	51	12	5	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	87	36	141	58	10	4	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	86	35	133	55	14	6	3	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	21	160	66	19	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	113	47	117	48	9	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	122	50	109	45	8	3	2	1

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 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



13 May 2011

Dear Students

**Inspection of St Katherine's School, Pill BS20 0HU**

When I visited your school recently with my colleagues, we met some of you at lunchtime and talked to others during lessons and at break. Thank you very much for your help and cooperation. We were impressed with your good behaviour, manners, the excellent way in which you get on with each other and these are some of the reasons, of many, that we judge your school to be good.

You make good progress. Results in your GCSE examinations are above average overall but not as good in mathematics. We have asked your school to make mathematics results better and to do this to make sure you are always challenged to make good progress in lessons and also to give you opportunities to use your numeracy skills across a wide range of subjects. We observed over 38 lessons and judged that teaching is good overall with some outstanding lessons. The good curriculum enables you to take a wide variety of subjects and many of you take part in extra-curricular activities. We were impressed by those of you who enjoyed the diploma class in hospitality and catering and by the new buildings. You have excellent relationships with staff who know you well and you make a very good contribution to the life of the school and local community. This is especially so in the sixth form where we judged that the new leadership team had made some very good improvements. We also judged that the school works extremely well with your parents and carers and with external agencies, particularly those who show you how high you can achieve.

Staff care for you exceptionally well which is why nearly all of you who filled in the student questionnaire said you enjoy school and feel very safe. You have an extremely good understanding of how to keep healthy. Your headteacher and other senior leaders have very clearly identified what needs to be done and they are very determined to carry on improving the school. They are supported by some good subject and pastoral leaders, teachers and other staff. While the school makes sure it evaluates how well it is doing at times we judge that it is too generous with its evaluations and we have asked the school to make sure it takes into account all outcomes when make its judgments.

We wish you well at this good school of which you are justifiably proud.

Yours sincerely

Michael Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector

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