

Saint George's Church Of England School

Meadow Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 7LS

Inspection dates 2–3 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Last inspection:	Not previously inspected	N/A
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students enter the school with attainment which is well below average then make good progress because they are well taught.
- The development of students' literacy skills is strong across the curriculum. As a result, all groups of students progress in their learning.
- Teaching is good because teachers know their students very well. They plan interesting and enjoyable lessons and support individuals well so that they make good progress.
- Students' behaviour is good. Students show good concentration in lessons. They show respect for staff, visitors and each other. Attendance has improved and exclusions have fallen.
- The sixth form is good. Students achieve well and make a positive contribution to the life of the school.
- Leadership, including governance, is outstanding. The headteacher and senior staff have high expectations for the school. They have brought about rapid improvements in teaching and improved the use of information about how well students are doing so that achievement is now good and, in some cases, outstanding.
- Members of the governing body know the school extremely well and have worked closely with the school leaders to bring about rapid improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small proportion of teaching requires improvement because occasionally teachers do not check on pupils' progress sufficiently well during lessons.
- At times teachers are not enabling all students to make good use of time in lessons set aside for them to reflect on and improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 40 lessons, of which six were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, they made a number of shorter visits to an assembly and tutorial sessions.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the Chair and two members of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and groups of staff.
- Members of the inspection team held meetings with three groups of students representing all age groups in the school. Discussions also took place with students informally.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own evaluation of how well it is doing, anonymised staff performance management records, safeguarding documentation and statistical information about students' achievement, attendance and exclusions.
- There were 140 responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire Parent View and 65 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Niel McLeod, Lead Inspector	Additional Inspector
Robin Gaff	Additional Inspector
Roger Garrett	Additional Inspector
Ann Sydney	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St George's Church of England School is an average-sized secondary school.
- Approximately two thirds of the students are White British, with a range of students from European, Asian, African and Caribbean backgrounds. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is significantly above the national average.
- The proportions of students supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are above national averages.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding students known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children of service families) is above the national average. There are no children of service families currently on roll.
- Approximately one third of students qualify for Year 7 catch-up funding which is provided by the government to support reading.
- St George's converted to become an academy school on 1 November 2011. At its previous inspection in March 2011, the school was graded as satisfactory.
- A small number of students attend off-site programmes provided by the North West Kent Alternative Provision Service.
- The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of students who make outstanding progress and the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that all teachers reach the high standard of the majority in making careful checks on the understanding of students throughout each lesson and adapt the lesson accordingly
 - ensuring teachers increase the impact of the time allocated in lessons for students to reflect on their work by using methods for reflection more effectively.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Students join the school with attainment that is significantly below average. Performance indicators for the school year 2011/2012 as well as recent, reliable information about students' progress throughout the school, and examination results provided by the school, show that students' attainment is in line with national averages.
- Examination results in the key measure of five or more good GCSE grades including English and mathematics have improved over the past few years. Detailed information provided by the school strongly indicates that this trend is set to continue.
- Improvements in English and mathematics mean that the proportion of students making and exceeding expected progress compares favourably with national figures. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve well.
- Lesson observations, work samples and student discussions confirm that disabled students and those who have special educational needs, as well as students with English as an additional language, make good and sometimes outstanding progress because of close monitoring by staff which identifies what support they need. Their teachers know them well and provide well for their individual needs.
- Students supported by pupil premium funding are achieving increasingly well as a result of close monitoring by the school. The gap between their achievement and that of all students nationally is closing rapidly as a result of the well-targeted support provided by the school. In 2012, their attainment in English and mathematics was about one grade behind other students in the school. Pupils supported by the Year 7 catch up premium made good progress. Students attending off-site programmes achieve well.
- Students are entered early for examinations in mathematics at GCSE but the strong progress achieved by students of all abilities in the subject shows that they achieve as well as if they had taken the examination later.
- Progress across a wide range of subjects and year groups is strong.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. Students enter with below average attainment. Attainment overall in the sixth form is broadly average and has risen substantially in recent years. Progress is good in a range of courses and, in some cases, students make outstanding progress.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved strongly in recent years with much good and some outstanding teaching observed.
- Teachers know their students well, know their subjects extremely well and plan lessons that build well on students' prior knowledge. They have high expectations of students and the school actively promotes skills in collaborative work and independence from Year 7 onwards. Students support each other well in lessons and this promotes effective learning. Relationships are very positive and the school ethos is a strong factor in the successful learning observed. In the lessons where students had the freedom to be creative, they showed exceptional levels of enthusiasm and engagement.
- In the small minority of teaching which still requires improvement, the teachers do not check on students' understanding effectively throughout the lesson and adapt the lesson accordingly.
- The school has developed strategies for reflective thinking, with dedicated time set aside in lessons. At times, teachers are not using these methods well to encourage students to think about their work and how to improve it.
- Assessment by teachers and by students themselves is strong. Most marking is detailed and supports good progress. Most students confidently assess each other's work and use mark

schemes accurately to enhance each other's learning.

- Literacy and numeracy are promoted very effectively by teachers across subjects. Although many students enter the school with lower reading skills than their peers nationally, they catch up quickly. Staff, parents, volunteers, governors and fellow students all support individual readers on a regular basis.
- Teachers work well with teaching assistants to provide extra help to those students who need it. Support for disabled students, those who have special educational needs and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium is consistently good. Students' progress is regularly and systematically checked and, as a result, these students make good and sometimes outstanding progress.
- Teaching in the sixth form is good and improving. Teachers create a positive climate for learning in which students grow into confident, independent learners. Expectations are high and the level of personal care and guidance provided by teachers makes a strong contribution to the students' good progress. Students are well informed about their progress and understand clearly how to improve their work. They are very well prepared to take the next step in their education, training or employment.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school's values, promoted through its assemblies, tutorial programme and lessons, make a strong contribution to good learning and progress. Equality of opportunity is promoted, discrimination is tackled quickly and the school is very effective in promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is resolute in its commitment to prevent and tackle any homophobic or racist behaviour.
- Students' attitudes to learning are good. They behave well in lessons and support each other well. In the sixth form, attitudes are very good. Students behave well across a range of settings. Despite the narrow corridors, students' movement around the site is calm and they are polite to staff, visitors and each other.
- The school deals well with the rare incidents of bullying. Its records of rewards and sanctions are detailed, and staff, pupils and parents are very positive about the impact of its work in creating a safe and positive environment for learners. A large majority of parents confirmed in their Parent View responses that their child was happy, safe and well looked-after.
- Exclusions have declined over the past three years and are below the national average. Attendance has improved significantly over the past two years and the proportion of students who are regularly absent is reducing. Attendance in the sixth form is high. Students are punctual to lessons.
- Students are proud of their school. They describe it as a 'really friendly' place and praise the hard work of their teachers in providing individual support for their achievement.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher and the leadership team have very high expectations of staff and hold them rigorously to account. As a result, there has been a rapid and sustained improvement in achievement, teaching and behaviour. Staff express full confidence in the headteacher and the leadership team, whose drive for improvement is evident in all aspects of school life. Leaders have successfully addressed the weaknesses and have acted swiftly and decisively to improve the quality of teaching. These factors demonstrate the school's strong capacity for further improvement.
- The school uses data extremely well to plan lessons which meet students' needs. Groups at risk of underachieving receive very well-planned support to meet their individual needs. For example, students with little or no English receive support in lessons from the school's own bilingual teaching assistants and make rapid progress. The school has allocated pupil premium funding effectively and, as a result, gaps in achievement between different groups of students have

narrowed rapidly.

- The senior leadership team monitor teaching regularly and make accurate judgements on its quality. Their evaluation of the school's strengths is clearly linked to the targets set for teachers and to their pay and performance. The school's systems are based on successful participation by staff at all levels. A rigorous programme of professional training is matched extremely closely to the needs of staff and this is reflected in the teaching and support provided by other adults observed in lessons. Staff morale is very high.
- The curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for students. There is a wide range of courses on offer as well as a range of extra-curricular activities, for example, in sport and the arts. The school enriches the curriculum through international visits, cultural awareness events, and visiting speakers, and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extremely strong as a result. The curriculum in the sixth form is very well matched to support students' progression to further education, employment and training.
- The school has strong links with local schools and participates in a wide range of community events. The local authority provides very good expertise to support the school's drive for continuous improvement.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students meets statutory requirements and all staff receive suitable training in safeguarding and child protection.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school. Most agree that it provides them with valuable information about their child's progress and that it responds well to any concerns they raise.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body know the school very well and is fully aware of its strengths and areas for improvement. They offer comprehensive support to the headteacher, leaders and staff, demanding the very best of them. They actively monitor the school through studying performance data, regular visits and through active partnership with students, and have a detailed and accurate understanding of the school's performance and of the quality of teaching. Governors have an excellent awareness of how pupil premium funding has been used to support learners and the impact it has made. They have attended a range of training provided by the local authority. Governors have set the school challenging but realistic targets and they make sure that any pay increases and promotions for teachers are closely related to successful performance in their roles. They have ensured that the school fully meets its requirements to safeguard children and has provided the school with a firm financial footing on which to build further improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137609
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	400169

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
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	972
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Joe King
Headteacher	Anne Southgate
Date of previous school inspection	22–23 March 2011
Telephone number	01474 533082
Fax number	01474 533844
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