



St Olave's and St Saviour's Grammar School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 101676
Local Authority Bromley
Inspection number 286147
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Michael Chisnall HMI

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

Type of school	Grammar (selective)	School address	Goddington Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Orpington
Age range of pupils	11–18		BR6 9SH
Gender of pupils	Boys	Telephone number	01689 820101
Number on roll (school)	935	Fax number	01689 897943
Number on roll (6th form)	345		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Malcolm Edwards
		Headteacher	Mr Anthony Jarvis
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
11–18	1–2 November 2006	286147

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Olave's and St Saviour's is an average-sized selective school with an Anglican foundation that draws its students from a wide area and a large number of primary and independent schools. When they join the school, students' attainment is very high. Very few of them have a learning difficulty or disability. The proportion eligible for free school meals is well below average. Around a third of students are from minority ethnic heritages, although no one group predominates. There is an average number of students who speak English as an additional language but none of these is at an early stage of language acquisition. The school has a specialism in mathematics and computing. Girls are admitted to the sixth form and constitute about a quarter of the roll.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Olave's and St Saviour's is an outstandingly effective school that deserves its high reputation. Students make rapid progress throughout the school and achieve standards that are exceptionally high. At the last inspection, it was judged to be very successful; it is now even better. Several factors contribute to this strong picture, not least of which is the highly effective leadership of the headteacher and senior team. Through their drive for still higher standards and knowing exactly where those gains ought to be made, there is a common sense of purpose among staff that is resulting in students who flourish academically and mostly gain the highest grades possible. This has not been achieved at the expense of students' personal and social development; academic success is only part of the picture. Students are also developing extremely well as confident young citizens who have a zest for learning and make a major contribution to the wider life of the school and beyond. They display excellent attitudes to all aspects of the school. As one student noted, 'I felt so proud when I was selected to come here.' This pride is tangible throughout the school.

Students are taught well and staff work hard to ensure that they learn at a fast rate; their enthusiasm for their subjects is infectious. Teaching is consistently good and some of it is outstanding. The challenge for the school is to provide teaching that is always at the level of the best in order to maximise the students' potential. Learning is very well supported by the excellent range of extra-curricular activities available, such as sport, music and languages, as well as the various fieldtrips and visits abroad. Although the curriculum is meeting students' needs and aspirations well, statutory requirements are not met in design and technology because of lack of facilities for teaching food technology and textiles.

The school's mathematics and computing specialism has a major impact on students' achievement and the wider life of the school. Standards in mathematics are among the highest in the school, enriched by participation in national competitions with significant successes. Teaching is enhanced by whiteboard technology. Students' learning is promoted through the developing virtual learning environment as well as excellent access to equipment, such as the laptop scheme for sixth-formers.

St Olave's does not stand still; it is a school that is constantly looking to improve still further. It has excellent capacity to do this because it knows itself well and has demonstrated a strong track record in improving since the last inspection. Spending is well directed and the school offers excellent value for money.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 1

The over-subscribed sixth form is highly effective in providing students with an education that enables them to achieve very well, both academically and socially. They make outstanding progress because of consistently good teaching that lets them know how they are doing and what they should do to improve. There are excellent opportunities for them to develop their personal skills and interests, including high

quality experiences in sport. Their courses are enhanced by personal, social and health education and guidance on careers and university applications. Students make major contributions to the life of the school through, for instance, acting as subject mentors for younger students or in organising school events. Those who join the sixth form from other schools are inducted very well and, through such activities as a September outward bound visit, they soon feel very much part of the school. The sixth form is very well led and managed and ensures that students' progress is carefully tracked and their personal and learning needs are well met, for example through excellent library and computer provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently at the level of the best in the school
- Meet statutory requirements in design and technology

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Standards are exceptionally high in all key stages and improving over time. Students make very good progress and their achievements are outstanding, meeting or exceeding the challenging targets set for them. Their achievements overall are among the best in the country. The few students with learning difficulties or disabilities make the same progress as others; boys and girls in the sixth form achieve equally highly. Almost all students gain the highest grades possible at GCSE and A-level. However, there is a little variation between subjects which the school is successfully tackling, although these are not particularly significant.

At Key Stage 3, mathematics is particularly strong with a long track record of success. The proportion of students gaining the higher levels in science has improved and is now matching that in mathematics. In English, not as many students are consistently reaching these levels although they are achieving very well. At Key Stage 4, fewer students have been gaining A*/A grades in some subjects, such as art and modern languages. The most recent examination results show that the gap is closing and that achievement in these subjects is nearly as high as in others, such as English language and history.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Students' personal development and, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Students are growing into mature and responsible young adults and are very well prepared for their future lives. They are articulate, friendly and responsible, able to work co-operatively and independently. There is a strong

community spirit. Students make a significant contribution both to the school and wider community, for example by helping in a local day nursery. The care and attention given by older students to the needs of younger ones is particularly good. Behaviour is excellent in all areas of the school and the small number with social and communication disorders make very good progress in social skills due to the high quality support from staff.

Students are aware of the importance of being fit and healthy but do not always exercise healthy choices in their packed lunches or in food bought outside the school. They enjoy school and show much respect to staff. Consequently, the attendance rate is outstanding and almost all stay on in the sixth form. Students are appreciative of everything that is on offer to them and take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including Saturdays. As one Year 12 student said 'It's not just the academic side that's important, it's the whole person'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

As the school recognises, the overall quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and some is outstanding. However, the very best quality of teaching is not yet the norm. The very positive attitudes shown by well-motivated students make a big difference to the quality of their learning.

There are some particular strengths that are important in promoting students' learning. Staff have very good subject knowledge and are skilled at putting this across to students in a way that enthuses them. For instance, in a Year 8 Latin lesson, the teacher expertly used relevant examples from everyday life to explain the use of the dative case. Questions are used very well to probe and develop understanding, especially when misconceptions are evident. The very strong relationships with students help them to feel confident in asking questions when they are unsure of something. There is much encouragement for students and subject clinics and mentoring by senior managers and sixth formers complement class teaching very effectively.

There are some features that are holding back teaching from being even more effective. There is not enough matching of learning tasks to ability within lessons so that the very highest possible achievement for the most able students is promoted still further. In some lessons, over-long teacher introductions inhibit opportunities for new learning and for tailoring learning for individuals. Nevertheless, the hard work and commitment of staff to students' achievement is impressive.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 1

The curriculum is well planned to meet students' needs and aspirations well. Despite its many strengths, statutory requirements are not met in design and technology because the school is not able to offer the food technology and textile elements of the subject. This is because of lack of facilities. All students follow a modern foreign language in Key Stage 4, which goes beyond requirements and makes a very positive contribution to students' cultural awareness. There is good provision for personal, social and health education up to and including the sixth form so that students' learning is complemented by guidance about how to lead safe and healthy lives.

The provision of an excellent range of extra-curricular activities is a significant strength of the school and students' lives are enriched very well indeed. These opportunities are varied and cater for a diverse range of interest and talents such as rugby, chess, music and public speaking. They have many opportunities to represent the school at home and abroad. The curriculum is also enhanced through the provision of additional information and communication technology courses, building on the school's specialism.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support for all students, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, is outstanding and is reflected in their high academic and personal standards. There is tremendous commitment from staff and sixth formers to ensure that all students maximise their educational and social opportunities. Sixth form students are well prepared for higher education and are given real responsibilities in the school. From the start, girls who join the sixth form are made to feel part of the community and given very good guidance. They recognise that their needs are met very well.

The procedures for safeguarding students are in place and staff and students are safety-conscious. Incidents of bullying are very rare and dealt with promptly. Students feel safe and have trusted adults with whom they can discuss any concerns. Their academic progress is monitored very well by the pastoral heads so that students who are not on course to meet their challenging targets are offered extra help and quickly steered in the right direction. The small number of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is included exceptionally well and there are good links between the school and a range of outside agencies. One student put it in a nutshell when he commented, 'Everybody is important here. Equality is excellent. Everybody helps you to do better'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Grade for sixth form: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. This is because there is a relentless focus on raising achievement that is successful in improving an already high performing school still further. The leadership provided by the headteacher and senior management team is excellent and provides a clarity of direction that is first class. Together with heads of year and heads of faculties, they have accurate knowledge of teachers' skills and use student performance data well to identify where improvements should be made. As a result, the quality of teaching is consistently good and more students are gaining the highest grades in tests and examinations.

The school is very well served by its governing body. It has excellent knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and gives it robust support. Through the link governor scheme, it keeps itself well informed about how each faculty is developing and offers good levels of challenge. Together with school staff, they oversee the school's finances assiduously.

A very strong feature of leadership is the way in which students experience equality of opportunity and know that each of them matters. This is not just for their academic achievement but also for their growth as responsible and mature young citizens. This is as a result of high quality communication in school between pastoral and academic staff that promotes a shared purpose.

The school knows itself well and demonstrates very good planning for improvement. Since the last inspection it has improved significantly, raising standards still further. It is far from complacent about its many strengths and is actively engaged in helping students to achieve even more highly.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I would like to thank you very much for the very warm welcome that you extended to my colleagues and me when we inspected your school recently. We really enjoyed talking with many of you and are grateful for the way in which you shared your thoughts with us. In return, I want to tell you about the inspection findings.

You attend an excellent school and, in no small way, you help to make it such a good place to be. This is because you work hard, learn well and do very well indeed in your tests and examinations. However, it is not just the academic achievement that is excellent. It is also because you have first-rate attitudes to all that the school offers and play your part in the wider life of the school, such as sports and societies. You are developing the skills needed to be excellent participants in higher education, the world of employment and in adult life. You are fine ambassadors for the school and your families.

Yours is an improving school, even though it already achieves very high standards. The headmaster and staff lead the school very well indeed and take great care to check how well you are doing. In this way, they identify where improvements are needed. For example, they are working hard and successfully to ensure that as many of you as possible can achieve the highest grades in all subjects. Your teachers teach you well, helping you develop a love of learning. Some of your lessons are of the highest possible quality and we have asked the staff to try to ensure that all your lessons are as good as the best. I am sure that the staff will be interested in your ideas about how that might be achieved.

We were particularly impressed by the very wide range of subjects and other activities that you are able to follow, either in the school day or beyond. Those really help you to extend your skills and talents and to follow special interests, drawing on the commitment of staff and senior students. Because of the lack of facilities, the school is not able to offer you experience in food technology or textiles as part of the design and technology curriculum. As this is a legal requirement, we have asked the school to do what it can to plug this gap.

When we looked at recent student and parent surveys, we could see just how highly you and your families regard the school. In discussions, many of you were clearly very proud of St Olave's. We think that these views are entirely justified.

With very best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Michael Chisnall, Her Majesty's Inspector