

# St George's Church of England Foundation School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118919
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	313149
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Patricia Metham 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>	Modern (non-selective)
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	1150
6th form	128
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Jodan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Keith Rumblo
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	25 September 2000
<b>School address</b>	Westwood Road Broadstairs CT10 2LH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01843 861696
<b>Fax number</b>	01843 609001

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<b>Age group</b>	11-19
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 January 2008
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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

St George's Church of England School is a large secondary modern school with a sixth form within an authority within which there are grammar schools. Standards on entry are lower than the national average, with relatively few higher attaining students coming into Year 7. The school draws many of its students from Thanet, where there are areas of significant deprivation. It has a higher than average proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, falling predominantly into two groups: those with difficulties relating to dyslexia and those with behavioural, emotional or social problems. Most students are of White British heritage, with English as their first language. The school gained specialist status for business and enterprise in 2004 and is a founding member of the Thanet post-16 consortium. Construction of a new school on the site, which will replace most of the current buildings, is due to start in the coming year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St George's is going through a process of transformation, responding to national changes in expectations and options within education and to its own analysis of local needs and opportunities. Overall effectiveness is at present satisfactory. The senior leadership team and governing body share with the local authority (LA) a clear vision and realistic targets for the school's future. Plans for the new buildings indicate how a stronger focus on vocational courses, on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to develop independent learning, and on specialist strengths in business and enterprise is to be supported by well-resourced and flexible teaching spaces and by modern facilities for science, technology, creative arts and sport. There is evidence that changes to the curriculum and pastoral structures are beginning to raise standards and promote achievement. An upward trend is seen most clearly in the sixth form and in Years 7 to 9.

Standards are low but not exceptionally so. Overall achievement is satisfactory. Given the relatively low levels of attainment with which students enter the school, results in national tests show good achievement in Years 7 to 9. Progress then slows significantly across Years 10 and 11, with performance in mathematics and English giving greatest cause for concern. In response, the school is combining a range of interventions for underachieving students with more rigorous monitoring of teaching and departmental management. Detailed in-school data, supported by results in the new modular mathematics GCSE, indicate that standards are now rising; however, the long-term impact of these initiatives is not yet certain. Progress is satisfactory in the sixth form.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching ranges from the competent, which tends to lack challenge and variety, to the outstandingly well paced, well informed and engaging. Students are generally aware of their personal targets but the marking of work does not regularly offer specific steps for individual improvement. House learning communities, with tutor groups that bring together students across Years 7 to 11, provide good care and guidance.

Curriculum provision is good throughout the school. Students are taught in ability groups for core subjects and humanities in Years 7 to 11. A project-based curriculum in Year 7 supports those with underdeveloped skills in reading, writing and mathematics. This programme will be extended into Years 8 and 9 over the next two years. More able students take national tests in science a year early. These students then tackle GCSE statistics and treble award science with good results, also English literature. Four pathways in Years 10 and 11 offer various combinations of GCSE and vocational options and a predominantly work-related course. These fit happily within the school's specialist status, benefiting from strong links with local businesses and the equal value given by the school to vocational and academic learning. There is a wide range of popular extra-curricular activities.

Members of the purposeful and energetic senior leadership team monitor departmental and individual performance in a systematic and rigorous way. Unevenness in middle management is inhibiting improvement in key areas, however, which means that leadership and management and capacity to improve are satisfactory overall. They are good in the sixth form.

Students' personal development is good. Students understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle, enjoy achievement and value opportunities to make a positive contribution. Despite concerns expressed by some parents about behaviour in class and in the playground, behaviour observed during the inspection was generally good and students said they felt safe and happy

in school. Good careers advice and a range of work-based learning help prepare students for future employment but their grounding in literacy and numeracy, on the whole, is not strong.

## **Effectiveness of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 3**

The sixth form is satisfactory overall, with good features. Increasing numbers stay on after Year 11 and most complete their courses. Students are well motivated and enjoy their studies; in particular, they value guidance and encouragement from their teachers and tutors. Their personal development is good. They willingly take on responsibility, for example, mentoring younger pupils or working in local primary schools as part of their community sports leadership award. There are regular careers visits and community events but sixth formers would welcome more opportunities for residential trips and team building.

Students enter the sixth form with generally below average results at GCSE and then make satisfactory progress in the one or two years of their courses. Results at AS and A level in 2007 were below the national average. However, standards reached in vocational courses, especially in health and social care and in sports and exercise, are broadly average and progress in this area is good. Teaching styles are lively, varied and engaging. However, restricted access to the library and to computers and the lack of a sixth form study area hamper independent learning.

The curriculum now matches the abilities, skills and needs of students well. Additional vocational courses have replaced subjects with low success rates, such as biology. There are good opportunities to attain or improve GCSE level qualifications and a wide range of options, extended through the Thanet consortium of six schools and a further education college. Specialist status in business and enterprise has promoted work-related links with the community; this is a significant strength.

Care, guidance and support in the sixth form are outstanding. Students' achievement is very carefully recorded and progress discussed with tutors at frequent intervals. Strategies for improvement are clear and effectiveness is monitored. A full programme of guidance is provided to support application to higher education or careers. The sixth form is well led and managed. There is a clear vision for future development and good capacity for further improvement.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop consistency of good practice in teaching and learning by ensuring that work matches the specific abilities of students and that marking gives detailed written feedback on how to improve.
- Ensure that all middle managers effectively promote good teaching and learning.
- Raise standards and improve the progress made by students in English, mathematics and science, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Most students enter with lower than average levels of attainment and make satisfactory progress. Standards are broadly in line with expectations: low, but not exceptionally so. Setting by ability in core subjects and a project-based approach for students with limited skills in reading, writing and numeracy have had a positive impact on progress and standards across Years 7 to 9. It is too early to judge the long-term impact of extended vocational options in Year 10. All students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make similar progress.

The proportion gaining five or more A\*- C grades overall at GCSE or equivalent increased in 2007, with strengths in English literature and statistics, which are taken by more able students, and in art and design and music. The proportion gaining five or more A\*- C grades including English and mathematics, however, was very low and has declined over the past three years. This has prompted a change of syllabus in some subjects and a programme of carefully targeted interventions, with evidence of improved standards in the current Year 11.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 2**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Students' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The recently introduced 'Student Voice', outreach work in the community and study of citizenship help students gain a balanced view of society. They explore global issues through active links with schools in Holland, America, Russia and South Africa. Most behaviour observed during the inspection was good, although there was some low level disruption in lessons by those not kept busy and interested. Students are friendly and say they feel safe, enjoy school and want to do well. They understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle, even if they do not always make healthy choices. They work together sensibly and willingly take on responsibilities in school and the wider community. The support they offer to each other and to adults reflects the school's Christian ethos. Racial harmony is a strength, with the small number from minority backgrounds being well integrated. As a Year 10 student remarked, 'It's like one big family.' Levels of attendance are in line with national figures and improving in response to careful monitoring and support for families when needed. The school's focus on business and enterprise and active collaboration with a range of organisations outside school help students develop skills for future employment but these are not matched by competence in English and mathematics.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Where the pace is brisk, tasks appropriately challenging and questions encourage independent thinking, students respond enthusiastically. Many teachers use ICT well to demonstrate concepts, illustrate working methods and encourage student participation. Mutual respect and shared goals create a good working atmosphere but

occasionally low-level disruption by a few students slows progress. Most lesson planning takes account of differing abilities, with clear and realistic learning objectives. However, when subjects are taught in ability sets, there is a tendency to give an entire group the same task with the same expectations irrespective of differences in students' starting points and levels of understanding. Teachers have confident subject knowledge, which they present clearly, but not always with the verve and variety needed to excite and engage their students. There is a good tracking system with strategies to challenge and support underachievers. These are having a positive impact.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 2**

The curriculum is moving towards a more vocational and practical, project and portfolio-based approach, while enhancing provision in key areas such as English, mathematics, science and ICT. It is good. Amongst its chief strengths is the flexibility for students in Years 10 and 11 to choose from a range of pathways spanning the academic-vocational spectrum, with a work-based option for those not well served by a predominantly academic menu. Another strength is the project-based curriculum to support slower learners in Year 7. The most able students can follow accelerated courses, taking some national tests early. The senior leadership team and heads of faculty review the curriculum regularly, making adjustments in response to evaluations of students' progress and enjoyment. Students feel they would benefit from further links with other schools and institutions in Years 10 and 11, along sixth form lines, and the school recognises that there are good grounds for extending into Year 9 the pattern of pathways already established in Year 10.

Specialist status in business and enterprise is having a positive impact on the curriculum. Investment in computers and the development of a 'can do' ethos are enhancing skills and raising students' aspirations. Links with local businesses involve mentoring, work placements, information for projects and careers guidance.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

#### **Grade for sixth form: 1**

Care, guidance and support are good. Tutors and teachers monitor progress carefully, with formal reviews four times a year to ensure that students know how well they are doing and what they should be able to achieve. The marking of written work, however, does not always offer specific advice on how to improve. Good careers guidance enables students to make informed choices, in consultation with parents and carers. The learning support team contributes significantly to the progress and achievement of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, making good use of external agencies whenever appropriate. Links with other schools are very good; those with primary schools ensure a smooth transition into Year 7. The school's house learning communities provide very strong pastoral support. Despite initial misgivings amongst some staff and students, the decision to combine students from Years 7 to 11 within tutor groups has been successful. It has reduced bullying, encouraged teamwork and given opportunities for leadership. Rates of fixed term exclusion, which used to be high, have fallen sharply with the introduction of the 'Behaviour for Learning Unit' on site as an alternative to exclusion and to assist the reintegration of any who have been excluded.

Arrangements for health and safety are good and child protection procedures are secure. Access for those with disabilities has been improved and further training for staff is planned.

## **Leadership and management**

**Grade: 3**

**Grade for sixth form: 2**

Leadership and management overall are satisfactory and good in the sixth form. In consultation with the governors and with staff, members of the senior leadership team have established a clear vision for the school's future, encapsulated in the regularly reviewed three-year development plan, and they monitor performance assiduously. They set challenging targets for departments and individual teachers and they follow up instances of underperformance. This has led to changes in the style and standard of provision in some departments and to a more practical and vocational curriculum well suited to students' abilities and aspirations. Students across the ability range can now follow a pathway they enjoy and that leads towards appropriate and manageable qualifications. The impact of middle management on teaching and learning, although often good, is variable and this has slowed improvement in key areas of the curriculum.

Sound financial management is integral to the school's strategic planning as well as providing a well run set of checks and balances in day-to-day budgeting and expenditure. The current layout of the site leads to some inefficiencies, for example, science facilities are scattered and sixth form facilities do not support independent study, but generally the deployment of staff and resources provides satisfactory value for money. Governors take their 'critical friend' responsibilities seriously and actively promote the Christian ethos of the school.

Leadership and management have responded enthusiastically and effectively to opportunities linked to St. George's specialist status for business and enterprise. The school is 'Spoke School' within the South East Enterprise Network and has provided training for its partner secondary schools in areas such as financial capability and economic well-being. One of the senior leadership team is a lead practitioner for business and enterprise in Kent and Surrey.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	3	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	2	
The behaviour of learners	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	1

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
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

1 February 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of St George's Church of England School, Broadstairs CT10 2LH

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited St George's recently and your willingness to show us your work and talk to us about your experiences at school.

As you know, we came to see how well St George's is doing and I am glad of this opportunity to let you know what we found. Your school provides you with a quality of education that is satisfactory and improving. You were keen to tell us that you enjoy school and that recent changes to the curriculum have given you a choice of subjects and activities that support your interests and ambitions. We saw some outstanding teaching and much that was good, especially when the pace and the variety of approach kept you actively involved and happy to learn. We could see that most of you appreciate the importance of a healthy lifestyle and treat each other with consideration. It was good to know that you feel safe when you come to school and are confident that your teachers and tutors will help you if you hit a problem and give you good care and guidance. We appreciated your readiness to take on responsibilities, especially sixth formers, and to play an active role in the community beyond your school.

So that you do as well as you possibly can, we have asked the school to ensure that:

- you are helped to do better in English, mathematics and science
- the way in which your work is marked always makes it clear how you can improve, and teachers always set you work that matches your abilities and challenges you
- the most successful approaches to the management of departments are spread right across the school to ensure that your learning is as good as it can be.

You can make an important contribution to your school's success by ensuring that you are always attentive and responsive in lessons and helping to ensure that no one is disruptive or makes others anxious whether intentionally or carelessly.

I look forward to watching St George's progress from strength to strength.

With best wishes

Patricia Metham Her Majesty's Inspector

1 February 2008



Dear Students

### **Inspection of St George's Church of England School, Broadstairs CT10 2LH**

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With best wishes

Patricia Metham  
Her Majesty's Inspector