

# St George's Church of England High School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133638
<b>Local Authority</b>	Blackpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	316174
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ruth James HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	910
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Deacon Ann Wren
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Elizabeth Warner
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2003
<b>School address</b>	Cherry Tree Road Marton Blackpool Lancashire FY4 4PH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01253 316725
<b>Fax number</b>	01253 316727

---

<b>Age group</b>	11-16
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 November 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	316174

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors. A section 48 denominational inspection was carried out at the same time as this inspection, and the relevant inspection report is published on the Diocese of Blackburn website.

## Description of the school

St George's Church of England High School is a comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 situated in the southern part of Blackpool. It serves a disadvantaged area and is a little smaller than average. Very few students have a first language other than English and the majority are of White British heritage. A higher than average proportion of students have learning difficulties and disabilities, but the proportion with statements is lower than average. The proportion of students receiving free school meals is above average. The number of students who leave before Year 11 or join the school after Year 7 is relatively high. The school became a business and enterprise college in September 2007.

## 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 a satisfactory school with many good and improving features. New buildings, improved facilities and the school's rising popularity with local parents are all significant changes since the last inspection. Results have improved, and the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE A\*– C grades has risen steeply since 2004.

Students are very well cared for, and vulnerable students are well supported. Staff know their students well as individuals. The school provides a well ordered, friendly environment where incidents of bullying are rare, and any that occur are tackled and resolved quickly. The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school.

Students' personal development is good. Inspectors found that students are generally well behaved in lessons and around school. Students make a positive contribution to the local community through for example, various charitable activities. There is a thriving student forum which provides students with good opportunities to have a say in aspects of the running of the school. Attendance is around average and has improved in recent years. A minority of students do not arrive punctually in the mornings.

GCSE examination results remain below national averages, but most students achieve the standards they are capable of. Progress is improving, although there is still variation in results between subjects. Key Stage 3 results improved in English and science in 2007.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. In many subjects, lessons are good and occasionally outstanding, but there are variations between subjects and in some learning is slower and teachers do not make full use of the wealth of data about progress to inform their teaching. Senior managers have a clear understanding of areas where teaching needs to be improved and strategies to achieve this are in place.

The curriculum is good. Specialist status is being used well to introduce enterprise activities throughout Key Stage 3 and business in Year 9, as well as extending opportunities at Key Stage 4. Extra-curricular activities, including sports opportunities, are good. There is a good range of courses and GCSE subjects at Key Stage 4, including a number of vocational options. Extended work placements are provided where these best meet individual needs.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior leadership team provide a clear sense of direction and drive. The school has undergone many changes in recent years, with new buildings and significant growth in student numbers, and these have been very well managed while the focus on raising standards has been maintained. The impact of management initiatives can be seen in the improved results, recent reduction in the number of exclusions, and improved attendance. School leaders have a clear understanding of where further improvements are needed and they continue to drive forward with these. The school's self evaluation was largely accurate and the school has good capacity to improve. Governance is good. Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They have prioritised resources appropriately to support strategic developments and management initiatives. Partnership arrangements are good.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning so that more matches the good practice that already exists.

- Ensure that the wealth of data available about student progress is used well to inform teaching and learning.
- Improve GCSE results for the minority of subjects where students do not achieve the grades they are capable of.

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**

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Students enter the school with below average attainment and they make satisfactory progress during their time at the school. Most of the school's targets are met. Results for students leaving Year 11 have improved. There has been a dramatic rise in the proportion of students gaining 5 or more good GCSE grades since 2004, although it remains below the national average. The percentage of students who achieved 5 or more A\*-C grades in 2007 was slightly lower than in 2006, but the proportion who got 5 or more A\*-C grades including English and mathematics was similar. Unvalidated data which takes account of students' prior attainment suggests that students' progress in 2007 was better than in 2006. Students did particularly well in vocational courses such as sport and leisure, travel & tourism and hospitality, travel & tourism. Students also did well in GCSE applied business studies, child development, ICT, English literature, geography, health and social care, physical education and graphics. Results for some subjects including maths, French, drama, history, and religious education were not as good. Girls did less well in science and mathematics than boys. All students achieved at least one A\*-G grades at GCSE, which is better than is the case nationally.

Standards in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are below average, but the proportion of students gaining at least the expected level improved significantly in 2007 for English and science.

Students with additional learning needs also make satisfactory progress and achieve results in line with expectations.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Students' personal development and well being are good. The majority of students have positive attitudes to learning. Behaviour is good overall, both in lessons and around the school. The vast majority of students are polite, courteous, smart and friendly. Relationships are good. A calm and orderly atmosphere prevails throughout the school day. There are occasional instances of low level disruption in lessons or poor behaviour around school which the school has developed many strategies and support systems which deal with this effectively. The number of exclusions has decreased considerably year on year and is low. There have been no recent permanent exclusions. Attendance is in line with the national average and has shown year on year improvement. The school works hard to further improve attendance, with the support of outside agencies. A few students arrive late for morning registration. Students enjoy school and say that they feel safe, knowing that the rare incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. There is a high take up of enrichment and extra curricular activities. The impact of sporting activities and the promotion of healthy eating options are encouraging students

to adopt healthy lifestyles. Students take on responsibility by serving on a well structured, purposeful and effective student council, acting as prefects, organising school events and raising money for local and national charities. Overall, the students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Students understand right from wrong and are confident about expressing their views. Some opportunities to prepare students for life in a multicultural society are missed. Vocational courses, enterprise education and a good work experience programme, plus other initiatives provide good opportunities to raise aspirations and develop the personal qualities students need for their future working lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Inspectors agree with the school's overall judgement that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In most of the lessons observed teaching was at least satisfactory and in a number of lessons it was good. Good lessons use effective teaching strategies and a range of well-planned and paced activities to ensure students make progress in their learning. Less successful teaching fails to build sufficiently on prior attainment and is insufficiently focused on meeting students' individual learning needs. In mathematics lessons there is too much whole class teaching which inhibits the learning of some students. For example, students who have grasped a technique are kept waiting with nothing to do while the teacher explains it again to those who have not. In other cases students who have not understood a teacher-led example are set problems they are unable to tackle, and teachers are not always astute in recognising this.

Occasionally, class management is not effective and this impacts negatively on the quality of learning. Good relationships between teachers and students have a positive impact on attitudes to learning, and high expectations help to raise student aspirations. Senior staff are aware that not all teachers maximise opportunities to ensure that students meet their full potential. A number of management and monitoring strategies are in place to ensure greater consistency, including the sharing of good practice. Assessment is thorough and student progress is closely monitored and analysed. All students know the levels they are working at and the targets they are working towards. Progress against individual targets is very well monitored at senior management level and followed up. Strategies to provide support when weaknesses are uncovered are implemented, but they are more effective in some subject areas than others. Teaching and learning are not always as sharply focused as they should be on supporting students to achieve their targets.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of curriculum provision is good. The curriculum is reviewed regularly and it is flexible and well-planned. It meets the needs of all students, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. There is a strong work-related dimension to the curriculum. As a result students are well prepared for future economic well-being. The school's new specialist status as a Business and Enterprise College is adding a highly appropriate focus on enterprise to the curriculum. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum in Years 7 to 9. This is supported by a well-designed cross-curricular Living Education programme, which helps students develop the skills and competencies required for learning and the future world of work. A particular strength

of the school is the curriculum offered for students in Years 10 to 11. Students are offered options both in school or in conjunction with a range of local training and education partners. In addition to a range of vocational courses, extended work placements are available for selected students. The school also provides highly valued enrichment activities including equine care, aero-nautical engineering, I-media studies and Italian. The school provides an extensive range of extra curricular activities for its students.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Support, care and guidance are good with very strong features. Inclusion is at the heart of the school. All students are valued and supported. A wide range of initiatives including mentoring along with very effective partnerships with outside agencies provides very good care and support for all students, but in particular those that are vulnerable and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Students say that there is always someone to turn to if they have worries and know that they will be listened to. They know that they are valued as individuals. Policies and procedures to safeguard children are in place and are understood by staff. Systems for risk assessments, recording accidents and ensuring safe working practices are in place. Transition arrangements when students enter school are good. Appropriate advice and guidance are given about Key Stage 4 course choices and post 16 opportunities. Effective systems are in place to set individual student targets and to track students' progress against these over time.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The governors and headteacher have an extremely firm shared commitment to raising standards and to constantly improving the quality of education provided for the students. The head has very effectively shared her vision for the school with senior managers who are keen and able to put it into practice. Management at head of department level is more variable, but overall it is good and there are initiatives in place to support and develop middle managers where necessary. Members of staff feel genuinely valued and morale is very good. The school runs very smoothly on a day to day basis and the atmosphere for learning is almost universally good. Students recognise this and are very positive about it and about all of the other opportunities that the school provides.

The recently acquired specialist status has provided a valuable extra dimension in business and enterprise education for all students.

Monitoring of the school's work at all levels is constant and rigorous. In a relentless pursuit of rising standards, good practice is shared effectively and mediocrity is challenged robustly at all levels. For example, in subjects where some of the teaching, learning or GCSE results are not good enough, support and guidance is given and expectations and timescales for improvements are made very explicit. Staff and governors contribute effectively to the school's accurate self-evaluation procedures. The process leads to good development planning with a manageable number of initiatives and improvements and suitable timescales. The success of these initiatives is evident in the improving standard of education that the school is offering and the response of local parents who have been quick to recognise it. Capacity for further improvement is good.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	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
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	3
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	2

### The quality of provision

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

<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>	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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	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

7 November 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of St George's Church of England High School, Blackpool

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We were able to visit lessons and to talk to a number of you and to some of the staff. We also looked at the results of questionnaires sent in by your parents. The vast majority of your parents are very positive about the school.

Since the school was last inspected the facilities have improved and there is more information and communications technology equipment. In the last few years the school examination results have improved a lot, and most of you make satisfactory progress in most subjects and achieve the qualifications you are capable of by the time you leave. However, in a few subjects results are not as good as they should be. Your headteacher and senior staff know where the weaknesses are and they are working hard with your teachers and other staff to make the school even better.

Most of you enjoy being at school. We found that generally you behave well in lessons and around school. The school cares for you well and you told us that bullying is rare and you feel safe. We noticed that a few of you are late for school in the mornings. All of you need to get to school in time for registration at 8.45am, so make sure you get up early and allow yourself enough time to get to school.

The school provides a good range of courses and subjects for all of you, including business and enterprise opportunities which fit with the school's new specialist status. The Living Education programme in Years 7 to 9 helps prepare you for the future and there are good work related opportunities at Key Stage 4. Many of you take advantage of the good extra curricular activities on offer.

Some of your lessons are good and a few are outstanding, but we found that teaching is satisfactory overall. You told us that you enjoy lessons where you are all actively involved in your learning, and many teachers do give you opportunities for this. We have asked your headteacher to continue to work with the staff to make even more of your lessons as good as the best. We have also asked her to make sure that all the information the school collects about your progress is used by all teachers to ensure that you learn as much as possible. These things should help you to achieve even more, so that you leave school with good qualifications. You can help by continuing to work hard and doing your very best.

We wish you every success in the future

Yours sincerely

Ruth James HMI