

# Saint George's Church of England School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118876
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	339316
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 December 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sheila Browning

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>	Voluntary aided
<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>	1151
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	185
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Joe King
<b>Headteacher</b>	Anne Southgate
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Meadow Road Gravesend DA11 7LS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01474 533082
<b>Fax number</b>	01474 533844
<b>Email address</b>	southgan@saintgeorgescofe.kent.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 32 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, the local authority advisor, the school improvement partner and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of the school's documentation and data relating to self-evaluation, safeguarding, policies, reviews, the school improvement plan and records of students' progress. The inspection team also analysed questionnaires from 116 parents or carers, 150 students and 55 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how successfully leaders and managers are raising the aspirations of girls and of White British students
- the effectiveness of measures taken to improve attendance
- the impact of assessment for learning in terms of driving up students' progress
- the effectiveness of actions taken to support middle leaders in reducing the variance in subject performance and whether or not these are established
- the impact of the school's humanities specialism on students' outcomes and the school's standing in the wider community.

## Information about the school

Saint George's is a large school in an area with selective education and currently has more boys than girls. Nearly a third of students have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is above the national average. Most of these students have behavioural, emotional and moderate learning difficulties or are on the autistic spectrum. Most students are from a White British heritage. Nearly a quarter of students are from minority ethnic groups, which is above that found in most schools, as is the percentage who speak English an additional language. The school has a growing number of students from Eastern Europe, many at the very early stages of learning English. Staff restructuring was carried out in September 2009, following the appointment of a new headteacher in January 2009 and other leadership appointments in the spring and summer of 2009. The school has had specialist status for humanities since July 2005, specialising in English, history and religious education, and it is an extended school working in partnership with the local community. The school holds several awards in recognition of its work, among them an international award reflecting the ethos of its humanities status.

**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?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**4**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school's provisional 2009 results indicate some improvements in students' attainment in Year 11 compared to the previous year. However, standards remain low in Year 11 and assessment data and students' current work indicate that attainment is also low in other year groups. Overall, students do not make enough progress and their achievement is inadequate. The appointment and actions of the headteacher and senior leaders have refocused the school on raising students' attainment and improving the quality of teaching and learning. They work tirelessly to embed their shared vision and ambition but have not eradicated inadequate teaching and poor behaviour. Students' behaviour is inadequate in a minority of lessons which confirms the concerns of some parents and students. Despite tackling some important areas of weakness, the impact of self-evaluation procedures and the monitoring of teaching and learning are not robust enough to have fully secured satisfactory outcomes for individuals and all groups of students.

During the inspection too few of the lessons observed sufficiently challenged students or fully identified work that matched every student's needs. This was most noticeable in mathematics where students became disengaged and the pace of learning slowed because behaviour management was not strong enough. Teachers have information about students' previous attainment and what they should be capable of achieving. However, this is not used rigorously enough to pitch work at the right level. Questioning is not employed consistently to check students' understanding. Some marking of work is good with helpful comments to move students on but this is not always the case. Newly appointed staff have generated enthusiasm, enabled more thorough tracking of vulnerable groups and triggered support, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they make at least satisfactory progress.

Provision and outcomes for students in the sixth form are satisfactory and improving, although attendance and the monitoring of students' attendance require improvement. The students play an important part in the life of the school, leading after-school activities as mentors and as role models for younger students.

Through the range of specific programmes, vocational and practical options, the curriculum satisfactorily meets students' needs. While a small minority of students said

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they did not enjoy school, several told inspectors how much they appreciated the wide range of enrichment opportunities and the 'exciting' humanities days. The specialist humanities status has played an important part in enhancing the curriculum, encouraging students' keen involvement in the school and in the wider community. For example, the students' involvement in a local history project culminated in a heritage book 'Before we came to Gravesend' and drama students have performed to, and worked with, local primary school children. Strong partnerships with other providers, organisations and services enrich learning opportunities and help secure the school as a focal point in the local community.

Strengths lie in the pastoral support and care for vulnerable students. Leaders have worked well with parents and students to improve attendance. Advice and guidance help students make informed choices about their future.

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

- Accelerate students' rate of progress in all subjects and especially in mathematics by:
  - increasing the proportions of teaching and learning that are at least good and reducing inadequate teaching
  - sharpening planning and lesson delivery so that work is always well matched to the differing learning needs of students
  - developing teachers' skills in managing any poor behaviour
  - ensuring lessons are interesting and engage students actively in learning
  - having higher expectations of what students can achieve and ensuring that they are consistently challenged in every lesson.
- Embed effective assessment practices in all subjects by:
  - using the information from regular assessments to sharpen the focus on learning
  - improving questioning and marking so students are clear about how to improve their work.
- Increase the rigour of school self-evaluation by:
  - monitoring improvements particularly in teaching and learning more robustly
  - developing the skills of senior and middle leaders so that they can more effectively iron out the inconsistencies in students' achievement in different subjects and firmly tackle any inadequate teaching
  - ensuring that the policy and procedures to manage students' behaviour are consistently applied by all teachers.
- Improve the attendance and the monitoring of attendance in the sixth form.

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The provisional GCSE results for 2009 indicate that the proportion of students gaining at least five grade A\*C passes including English and mathematics rose slightly. Nonetheless students' attainment remains low. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds and girls do slightly better than other groups. Overall students' learning and progress are inadequate. However, students from minority ethnic groups, girls and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily. Students' achievement in English is satisfactory but it is inadequate in mathematics. Leaders are wisely using successful practices in English and in the humanities to extend best practice to other subjects but this has not yet had any significant impact on students' attainment because they have not yet been fully embedded.

Students contribute well to the school and wider community. Older students run after school clubs and support younger ones, they have also been trained to observe lessons and give feedback to teachers. Plans to renovate and run a derelict 'tea-house' in a local park so that students can experience a 'real life' business venture and work within the local community, help enhance their basic and social skills. The ethos as a faith school is seen in the way students take an active part in worship. Many students participate in sport, music, cultural celebrations and community events. Through their international work, links with a school in Africa, and events such as Black and Asian history month they show a satisfactory awareness of different cultures and beliefs. Students understand the importance of leading healthy lives. They say they feel safe but that more should be done to reduce poor behaviour. Attendance is improving and exclusions are reducing. Most students enjoy positive relationships with each other and show their ability to adapt and accept each other's cultural difference. They usually show respect to teachers and other adults. Behaviour in and around the school is generally satisfactory, but too many instances of poor behaviour in lessons limited learning.

While a large majority of completed student questionnaires were positive, a minority expressed concerns about behaviour, and felt that the school did not help them to be healthy. A small minority commented that teachers were not interested in their views.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3

<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.

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<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>4</b>
	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching often fails to provide interesting and practical learning activities that are well matched to students' differing needs. This can result in some poor behaviour, which teachers do not always manage well. In some lessons opportunities are missed to raise students' self-esteem and their aspirations. Currently, there is not enough good teaching and too much that is satisfactory or inadequate to ensure that students consistently make sufficient progress. Some teachers are beginning to use assessment, marking and questioning to help students understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve: there are good examples in the schools' specialist subjects. However, this is not consistent or rigorous enough in all subjects.

Weaker elements in the curriculum have in the past restricted students' progress. The reallocation of staffing has allowed areas of weakness to be tackled by building on areas of strength such as the humanities. Sensible steps are being taken to increase pupils' ability to access the curriculum. For instance, non-practical lessons begin with a short period of reading. A small Year 7 transition group helps students focus on improving their basic skills. Three-year option courses, a much wider range of vocational, BTEC and applied GCSEs, as well as learning personalised to their needs, are having a positive impact on students' progress. Students who speak English as additional language can gain GCSEs in their first language. Provision for gifted and talented students is developing but is not embedded.

Although the quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory for most students, it is good for those who are most vulnerable. The personalised learning team, use of the inclusion room and of sanctuary cards help keep those at risk of exclusion in school. Those who speak English as an additional language, and their families, are well supported by key workers and staff. The community house system is popular and valued by students. Parents are satisfied with the care and welfare provided for students.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<p><b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms</p>	
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<p><b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<b>4</b>
	4
<p><b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b></p>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b></p>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leaders have worked hard in a short space of time to increase the pace of change, but the drive to improve the school is not embedded. Most marked is how successfully leaders are raising the aspirations of students, particularly girls. Senior managers, like many of the middle managers, are growing in their new roles and responsibilities. Systems for tracking, monitoring and analysing the impact of teaching and other aspects of the school's work, while in place, are not robust enough. Self-evaluation is focused on the right priorities but is not sufficiently rigorous and accurate. Good developments such as that to improve assessment for learning are not consistently established. There has been too little time for initiatives to have an impact on inadequate teaching, low achievement and unsatisfactory behaviour. The school has not demonstrated a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

Governance is satisfactory and governors took urgent action last year to ensure continuing leadership. Safeguarding procedures are robust. The school does not promote equalities or tackle discrimination adequately because of the uneven performance and experience of different groups of students.

Strong partnerships, links with agencies, other professionals and local schools and colleges promote students well-being and learning. Leaders and governors promote community cohesion satisfactorily. Parents and carers are positive about the school, but there is still additional work to be done in ensuring that parents are well informed, are responded to promptly and contribute fully to the life of the school.

A very small minority of staff highlighted concerns through the staff questionnaire about the management of unacceptable student behaviour and expressed concerns about the effectiveness of senior leaders

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<p><b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b> Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning</p>	<b>4</b>
	4
<p><b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b></p>	<b>3</b>
<p><b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b></p>	<b>3</b>



<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Sixth form

Students' attainment has risen over the last three years. Retention rates have risen as a result of the changes made to the curriculum in response to students' needs, interests and very mixed prior attainment. Unsuccessful courses have been dropped, and students can choose from a range of A-level, vocational, BTEC and diploma courses from engineering to Japanese. Strong partnerships with schools, colleges and higher education providers enable the school to meet the needs and aspirations of current students. The Extended Project Qualification is offered to students enabling them to develop their learning skills further. Learning mentors and other staff track and monitor individual students but there is more to do to secure sustained progress. Despite their barely satisfactory attendance, which is also not monitored carefully enough, students enjoy being in the sixth form. The quality of the care, guidance and support they receive is satisfactory, though the lack of a common room reduces opportunities for their personal and social development. Students are encouraged to develop independent working skills. They show initiative, run whole-school events and act as good role models to younger students. They take their various responsibilities seriously. Leadership and management are satisfactory.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	3
The quality of provision in the sixth form	3
Leadership and management of the sixth form	3

## Views of parents and carers

A small minority of parents and carers voiced concerns over students' behaviour, their child's progress and lack of information on their progress. Inspectors agree that students' behaviour is not always good enough and unacceptable behaviour in lessons is not always well managed. Inspectors found progress uneven. The school is improving

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the information parents receive about their child's progress.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St George's Church of England 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 116 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1151 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	35	64	55	10	9	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	41	35	65	56	8	7	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	22	68	59	17	15	2	12
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	24	60	52	22	19	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	27	23	69	59	10	9	3	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	22	58	50	18	16	4	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	18	75	65	13	11	3	3
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)	26	22	62	53	7	6	6	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	22	65	56	13	11	5	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	22	54	47	25	22	8	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	21	18	62	53	15	13	6	5
The school is led and managed effectively	29	25	57	49	10	9	5	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	30	61	53	12	10	4	3

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 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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 pupil's 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.**



3 December 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Saint George's Church of England School, Gravesend, DA11 7LS

We were very grateful for your welcome, and the honesty and maturity with which you talked about your school when we visited recently. Much of what you told us what was good about your school and what you said needed to improve was right. Most of you enjoy school and get involved in the extra opportunities offered through the school's specialism, and its international and extended school status. You are very involved in the school, local and wider communities. Well done to those of you involved in the Cambria Thames barge restoration project! You show a satisfactory understanding of people from different cultures and beliefs through your work celebrating Black and Asian history month. The curriculum is satisfactory and improving and you told us you feel supported and cared for.

Your headteacher and staff are working hard to improve the school, but there is still much to do to help you all achieve as well as you can and make up lost ground. We think you could make better progress if more teaching was consistently good and better. In some lessons, work is not always pitched at the right level, nor is it interesting or challenging enough. While we know some marking is good, the comments are not always about what you need to do to improve. Some of you do not behave well enough in lessons and this disrupts your learning.

Some things need to improve quickly because the school's overall effectiveness is currently inadequate. For this reason the school needs special measures. This means it will receive additional help and inspectors will visit regularly to check on improvements. You can all help by making sure that you concentrate and behave well. Sixth formers can also contribute to the improvement by attending more regularly. We have asked your headteacher to make sure that:

- teaching is consistently good so that you make more progress in all subjects, and especially in mathematics, and behaviour improves
- teachers consistently use assessment information to improve learning and make it clear how you can improve your work
- all leaders monitor improvements and developments more rigorously to make the school even better

- attendance in the sixth form is monitored more rigorously so that it improves.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Browning

Lead inspector

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