

St George's C of E Foundation School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118919
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358472
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Secondary modern
School category	Foundation
Age range of students	11–19
Gender of students	Mixed
Gender of students in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of students on the school roll	1,192
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Jordan
Principal	Kim Stoner
Date of previous school inspection	30–31 January 2008
School address	Westwood Road Broadstairs Kent CT10 2LH
Telephone number	01843 861696
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. Inspectors observed different aspects of the school's work including 34 lessons. In addition, they held discussions with leaders and managers, members of the governing body, teachers, teaching assistants and groups of students, and scrutinised a range of documentation including that relating to safeguarding practices, the school's self-evaluation and development planning. They also evaluated questionnaire responses from 86 parents and carers, 121 students and 63 staff.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average for similar types of school. It has been designated as a business and enterprise college. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that usually found. Most students are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is just above average. The school has met the government's floor targets for academic performance in the last academic year but did not in either of the previous two years.

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	2
Achievement	2
Teaching	2
Leadership and management	1
Behaviour and safety	1
Does the school adequately promote the students' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

- This is a good school that has made rapid improvement in the last two years. Students enjoy their education and, as a result, they become responsible young people with a thirst for knowledge. The school prepares them well for the next stage of their education through a relevant curriculum.
- Achievement is good. Standards both in classwork and in examinations are improving markedly, with the latter now matching national averages. The majority of students make good progress, including those in the sixth form. This is because teachers have high expectations of what students can achieve so that all of them have the opportunity to succeed.
- The proportion of good and better teaching is rising sharply. Inspectors observed many lessons where students were enthusiastic about their learning because teachers planned interesting activities for them. Occasionally, the most-able students and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not make the progress that they should because teachers provide all students in their class with the same work which proves too easy for some but too difficult for others. Teachers do not always ensure that the questions they ask their students make them reflect sufficiently or think carefully about their responses.
- Excellent relationships exist between students and staff. Adults, students and parents and carers all agree that behaviour in the school has improved significantly over the last two years. There are only very rare instances of misbehaviour, which are dealt with effectively.
- The excellent work of the Principal and her team has ensured academic

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standards have risen and that middle managers are highly effective. The school has successfully tackled the issues raised in the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build upon work already done to raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring the most-able students reach the higher grades in national examinations.
- Improve satisfactory teaching to good by ensuring all teachers:
 - match activities and tasks to the full range of students' abilities
 - ask questions which deepen students' understanding and develop their thinking skills.

Main report

St. George's offers its students a good standard of education. Some areas of its work are outstanding. It is currently heavily oversubscribed and parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. All parents and carers who answered the questionnaire felt that their children were happy at the school and were well looked after. The vast majority said the school was well led and managed. One parent was particularly impressed with the way the school has managed change, another praised the excellent support and communication.

Achievement is good. Students make good progress in their learning, and standards have risen considerably in recent years and continue to do so. In 2010, the proportion of students who gained five or more A*-C grades in their GCSEs was above average. With English and mathematics included, the percentage was below average but the school's reliable tracking data clearly show results are on track to meet national averages this year. This is supported by the current work in students' books. However, the percentage of students who reach the highest grades is below average across a number of subjects. Attainment and progress have improved as a result of the robust tracking of progress, effective target setting and the way teachers are held to account for students' progress. Those identified as being in danger of underachieving are well supported and, as a result, the school has narrowed the attainment gap between girls and boys and between those students known to be eligible for free school meals and their counterparts. Work scrutinies confirm that looked after children do well and some make outstanding progress. The progress of those students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to the national average but in 2010 the school identified that the gap between this group and the rest of the school population was still too wide. It is clear that this is being addressed effectively in lessons and the extra provision made for these students. Progress in lessons is good and sometimes outstanding. In a good Year 7 mathematics lesson, a group of less-able students made good progress because the teacher made targets and National Curriculum levels explicit. She encouraged and

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prompted students to aim high and, as a result, all of them were able to calculate squares and square roots using a calculator.

Students make good progress in the sixth form relative to their starting points. This is because the curriculum is continually reviewed to ensure it meets the needs of the vast majority of students. Vocational provision has been extended and the school is beginning to introduce some AS-level subjects. Teaching is good and students are challenged well to achieve. The school's specialist status contributes well to the sixth-form curriculum in particular, and students achieve particularly well in business studies.

Much has been achieved in the last two years and the school has built itself a reputation worthy of note. The dynamic leadership of the Principal has ensured that the reorganised senior and middle leadership team is highly effective. As a result, leadership and management are outstanding. All leaders are passionate about improving the life chances of students and are an enthusiastic and able group of individuals who give clear direction and live and breathe their vision for the future with all staff. The line management of subjects has become tighter and consequently, dedicated and hard-working middle leaders do an excellent job. Governors are knowledgeable and support and challenge leaders by asking questions which help to drive forward school improvement. The school now has an unrelenting focus on driving up student achievement and ensuring equal opportunities exist for all students to succeed. This is reflected in the highly positive attitude of staff who willingly accept stringent systems of accountability and responsibility for student progress. Leaders and managers are never complacent and do not tolerate excuses for failure, and have a robust approach to improving teaching. The school has clearly articulated its priorities in its improvement plan which is based on frank and accurate self-evaluation. The curriculum is reviewed annually to ensure it delivers the best outcomes and, as a result, the school is introducing the English Baccalaureate later this year to extend the learning of the more-able students. Together, these qualities all ensure that the school has an excellent capacity for further improvement.

There are excellent partnerships with other schools and local agencies which provide extra breadth to the sixth form curriculum. There are excellent links with local universities to raise student aspirations and to improve learning, for example, in the sixth-form forensic science course by reciprocal visits with undergraduates.

In the large majority of lessons, learning and progress were good or better with numerous good examples of teachers' high expectations. Activities are mostly appropriately challenging, and boost learning and engage and motivate students. The pace of learning and progress in most lessons is good, though this was not always the case in science. Lesson objectives are regularly explained and tasks are linked closely to learning outcomes and students' personal targets. Consequently, students are able to identify how well they may make progress. Questioning is used to inform feedback and extend students' confidence toward more independent learning. However, in a small minority of lessons, teachers miss opportunities to support and extend student discussion and do not facilitate reflection on learning.

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Many questions are too simple and do not develop pupils' problem-solving or thinking skills. Exercise books demonstrate consistently good use of the school's 'RAG rated stickers' to identify next steps in learning, and there is good use of examination assessment criteria to enable self-assessment. Students spoke highly of the academic guidance their teachers provide and say they feel stretched and challenged in their lessons.

Teachers' subject knowledge is a strength, particularly in mathematics, English and business studies, and planned activities develop subject skills, knowledge and understanding. The school's business and enterprise status enriches lesson content in these areas. In one excellent English lesson, effective use of well-structured resources ensured all students could successfully access the task and confidently engage in meaningful analysis. In some lessons, challenge is not as strong as it might be because activities are not specifically linked to students' abilities. Support provided by learning support assistants is not always as effectively focused as it should be.

Literacy is taught well across the school. Key vocabulary is referenced consistently and the reading age of boys is improving significantly in Years 7 to 9 because of effective strategies recently introduced. A particular strength is the support given for students in Years 10 and 11 to improve their extended writing toward a more developed and analytical style.

Students have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe because their welfare is a top priority for the school. One described the school as a 'stable environment where teachers take time with you'. Students confirm that there is little bullying of any kind. Should it happen, they were confident that it would be dealt with promptly and effectively. Mixed-age tutor groups have encouraged warm relationships between older and younger students where older students are protective and nurturing. There is no evidence of discrimination of any kind and none is tolerated.

Behaviour, both throughout the school and in lessons, is invariably at least good and the majority is outstanding. Inspectors saw clear evidence that good behaviour is a well-established feature of the school's ethos. Students are almost always engaged with their work across all abilities. Less-experienced staff and student teachers are treated with the same level of respect as experienced teachers.

Excellent tracking systems, analysis, rewards and highly effective teamwork between school staff and outside professionals have contributed well to the improving picture of attendance. The school actively promotes parents' and carers' understanding of the explicit link between attendance and achievement which is paying dividends. Attendance at off-site provision is closely monitored and is above average. The quality of this provision is regularly evaluated and different arrangements made when this falls short of the school's high standards. The school has replaced exclusion with an internal 'Alternative Curriculum Unit' which has led to improved attendance for a significant number of students.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted enthusiastically. There are strong links with local clergy who regularly take assemblies. The school has created a

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new post of Christian ethos coordinator which contributes well to students' spiritual development. All students willingly attend communion whether communicants or not. The school has close links with a school in Uganda. Consequently, they have learnt about the demands of living in a developing country and have been active in raising funds to support the community.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of students registered at St George's C of E Foundation 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1192 students registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	46	53	38	44	0	0	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	41	48	42	49	0	0	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	46	53	39	45	0	0	0	0
Q4 The school meets my child's particular needs	40	47	43	50	0	0	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	45	52	40	47	0	0	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	44	51	41	48	0	0	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	24	28	54	63	0	0	0	0
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	19	22	45	52	0	0	1	1
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	32	37	43	50	0	0	0	0
Q10 The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	35	48	56	0	0	0	0
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	45	52	36	42	0	0	0	0
Q12 The school is well led and managed	52	60	33	38	0	0	0	0

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 all its students' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its students well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its students.
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 students. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the students' 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 students 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">■ The achievement of all students.■ Behaviour and safety.■ The quality of teaching.■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ how well the school promotes students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Progress:	the rate at which students are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the students' 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.



26 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of St George's C of E Foundation School, Kent, CT10 2LH

Many thanks to those of you who found time to speak to us during your school's recent inspection. A special thanks to those sixth-formers who looked after us during our time with you. You were great role models. We are writing to you to let you know of the inspection findings. We think that your school is good. This is because everyone in your school is given the opportunity to succeed. Your Principal does an excellent job, along with her senior leadership team and teachers, to ensure you do well. Your behaviour is excellent and we found you to be very polite and courteous. You have great relationships with your teachers. They teach you well and prepare lessons which interest you and help you to learn very effectively. Standards and examination results are rising markedly, which is due to the hard work of all staff and, of course, you, the students. You make good progress during your time in the school. You told us that you feel safe in school and your parents and carers agree.

Even in a good school like yours, there are still improvements to be made. We have asked your school to:

- Ensure that results in the school continue to rise in English and mathematics in particular, and that those of you who are capable of reaching the highest grades are enabled to do so.
- Ensure that satisfactory teaching improves to good. Sometimes, the most able amongst you are not challenged to achieve in lessons as well as you could be and those of you who struggle sometimes in lessons need more support. We have asked the teachers to make sure you are all provided with work that matches your ability. We have also asked that teachers ask more difficult questions which make you reflect and develop your thinking skills.

You can all help to improve the effectiveness of your school by supporting your school's vision, 'Only the best will do!' Always try your best.

We wish you all the success you deserve at St George's.

Yours sincerely
Glynis Bradley-Peat
Lead inspector

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