

St Luke's Science and Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113550
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	357378
Inspection dates	30 September 2010–1 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Karl Sampson

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	982
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Chris Buswell
Headteacher	Mr Mark Pinchin
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 34 teachers and 29 lessons, and saw parts of nine other lessons and activities. Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, the governing body and groups of students. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of the school's work, policy documents and students' work. They also scrutinised 98 questionnaires sent in by parents and carers, and questionnaires completed by staff and a sample of students from each year group.

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

- How well all groups of students achieve in mathematics.
- The consistency in the quality of teaching to ensure high levels of progress for all students, in particular, for middle-attaining boys, students known to be eligible for free school meals and students with special educational needs and/ or disabilities.
- The impact of the curriculum and care, guidance and support in promoting outstanding outcomes for all students.
- The contribution to school improvement made by partnerships and the science and sports specialism. The impact of the monitoring and evaluation carried out by senior and middle leaders on student outcomes.

Information about the school

St Luke's Science and Sports College is an average-sized secondary school and serves the city of Exeter. The school has held sports and science specialist status since 2005. Most students are of White British heritage and the vast majority speak English as their first language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly above the national average. There is a designated resource base in the school for students with physical difficulties. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average; their needs include moderate learning difficulties and social, emotional and behavioural issues. The proportion of students who have a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. The school has recently received the Healthy Schools Plus award as well as the International School award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Luke's is a good and improving school which truly reflects its values of high aspiration, total inclusion and success for all. Equal opportunity is promoted exceptionally well throughout the college. In this outstandingly caring and supportive environment, students are nurtured as individuals, enjoy their learning and achieve well. Under the leadership of an inspiring principal, the strong senior leadership team have been empowered to drive improvement and demonstrate that they have the determination and passion required of leaders and managers in a successful school. Although some initiatives are still relatively new, others are firmly embedded in practice, most importantly the systems for tracking the progress of different groups of students and devising effective programmes of intervention to address any potential underachievement. As a result, the college is able to show a rising trend in attainment and outcomes and all students make good progress, regardless of their background, starting points or special educational needs. The school's capacity to sustain this improvement is good because:

- it is led well and managed by a principal who has a clear vision for its future
- appropriate action has been taken to strengthen leadership and management at departmental level and to increase capacity in the senior leadership team
- leaders have a detailed, accurate and realistic understanding of the college's strengths and areas for development there is a strong sense of teamwork and collaboration among staff and a commitment to raising attainment and improving achievement for all.

The quality of learning in classrooms across the college is improving because of the astute monitoring by college leaders and a sharp focus on improving classroom practice. There is some outstanding teaching which really stimulates the students and involves them actively in their learning and the assessment of what they have learned. Some teachers are very skilful in tailoring learning to fully meet the needs of all students and ensure that progress is consistently good or better. They know exactly where students are in their learning, understand when they are ready to take the next steps and convey clearly how this can best be achieved. However, this excellent practice is not yet embedded consistently across the college. Senior leaders are well aware of the need to strengthen the use of information gained from monitoring and evaluation by middle leaders to manage improvement, and to improve the consistency of teaching and assessment among teachers. This year, the college has put in place appropriate mechanisms to ensure that the very best practice is seen across all curriculum areas but these initiatives are still in their early days.

◆ Behaviour is good in and around the college; students are polite and courteous to each other and staff, and say that they enjoy their time at the college. The students spoke with great respect for their teachers, who they believe work very hard on their behalf. Students

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are viewed as individuals with their own particular needs and this has an extremely positive effect on their personal development which, in some aspects, is outstanding. Thanks to outstanding safeguarding procedures, students feel exceptionally well cared for and extremely safe and secure. The college provides particularly good support through carefully tailored provision for students whose behaviour might otherwise exclude them from education and examination success. ♦ The quality of the curriculum, the outstanding range of partnerships and the excellent opportunities arising from the college's specialist status significantly enhance students' personal outcomes. Consequently, students' adoption of healthy lifestyles, their future economic well-being and the contribution that they make to the life of the college and beyond are outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop and strengthen the leadership and management of teaching and learning, by:
 - ensuring consistency of rigour in the way middle leaders monitor the work of their subject areas, evaluate the impact on students' progress and plan for improvement.ensuring that systems for monitoring and supporting teaching and learning result in the very best practice being seen more consistently across the curriculum.
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- Strengthen assessment practices in teaching and learning so that students' progress is consistently good or better across all subjects, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use assessment data consistently well when planning lessons so that work matches the needs of individual students and provides high levels of challenge for all.
 - making sure teachers extend the use of high-quality dialogue with students so that teaching provides greater opportunity for students to explain their ideas fully and deepen their understanding .ensuring that all students know exactly what they need to do to improve their work through consistently high-quality verbal and written feedback.
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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

- In the large majority of lessons observed, students made good progress and achieved well. Students are attentive and engage enthusiastically with a wide range of activities. They particularly enjoy active, practical learning and the opportunity to be an equal partner in the learning process. In the weaker lessons, progress is not as good as it could be because work does not always best meet individual needs.
- GCSE examination results have improved significantly over the last three years and attainment is now broadly average and rising. The standards seen in lessons and

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students' books, results from early entry and the school's latest analysis of performance for 2010 results indicate that progress is accelerating.

- The college meets the needs of different students well and all groups of students, including middle-attaining boys and students known to be eligible for free school meals, make at least good progress. Consequently, students in Years 10 and 11 are on track to surpass their ambitious and increasingly challenging targets.
- Students with special educational needs and/or with physical difficulties make similar progress to their peers because of the high-quality individual and personalised support programmes which are put in place.
- In the past, the achievement of students in mathematics was well below that in English. However, improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, recent changes to the leadership and management structure and a more focused approach to intervention strategies and teaching groups are helping to reduce the gap in achievement. Despite achieving their challenging target this year, the college has good plans in place to accelerate progress in mathematics further.
- The sports and science specialism makes an outstanding contribution to students' achievement, career development and enjoyment of school life. It engages students in learning and helps them to gain the skills they need to take the next steps in their lives with confidence. The college is doing all it can to raise students' aspirations and, last year, the number of students who left school and who were not in further education, employment or training was significantly below the national average.
- Opportunities for students to contribute to the school and wider community are extensive and diverse, and participation rates are extremely high for all groups. Students demonstrate excellent engagement with the local community through their leadership of sports clubs and sports festivals for local primary schools.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

- The curriculum is developing well and provides an appropriate level of flexibility to meet the needs of individuals. It is underpinned by the college's philosophy of ensuring that all students are 'Fit to succeed and fit to learn'. The Year 7 curriculum and its emphasis on developing functional skills as well as personal, learning and thinking skills is innovative. It is highly regarded by students and is having a positive impact on their transition from primary to secondary school.
- There is a good balance between academic and vocational courses. At Key Stage 4, the specialist status and the school's partnership work with other local providers have improved the richness of vocational and applied opportunities available, especially in science. This has enabled a much greater degree of personalisation for students when selecting courses and, as a result, their aspirations, achievement and enjoyment are improving.
- The range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities on offer is extremely impressive. These opportunities are well attended by all groups of students and give strong support to aspects of their personal development.
- The large majority of lessons observed were good or better. At their best, lessons are inspiring. These lessons are carefully planned to meet the differing needs of students with teaching assistants used expertly to promote learning and

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independence. They are underpinned by positive relationships with classes which establish a great platform for learning.

- Less effective lessons, where progress is at best satisfactory, typically have the following characteristics:
- a tendency for teachers to talk for too long, with the result that students spend too much time listening passively .
- learning activities that are not challenging or do not match the needs of all students and are slow-paced.questioning and dialogue that rarely 'delve deep' in order to check and deepen students' understanding or that fail to create opportunities for students to think for themselves and explain their ideas fully.
- questioning and dialogue that rarely 'delve deep' in order to check and deepen students' understanding or that fail to create opportunities for students to think for themselves and explain their ideas fully.
- Marking and assessment practices vary in quality. They are at their best in history, English and physical education, where teachers provide precise subject-specific guidance. This identifies precisely what students need to do to improve their work and gives them the opportunity to reshape their learning. For example, a physical education lesson made use of incisive self- and peer- assessment promoted by high-quality dialogue with the teacher to empower students to articulate the key features required to improve their 'ball skills'. However, such good practice is not consistently in place across the curriculum.
- The way in which the school cares for and supports students is outstanding. Everyone is known as an individual and the excellent links to external agencies complement a coherent, integrated approach to developing the whole person.
- A variety of nurture groups support students who find learning a struggle and the academic re-integration centre does an excellent job in supporting students who are disaffected and/or display challenging behaviour. They are valuable aspects of provision in supporting achievement and ensuring that students are equipped for life beyond the college, despite finding being in lessons difficult.
- Individual support and the provision for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities are strong. For example, the provision for students with physical difficulties in the Brunel Centre is outstanding. The range and quality of the personalised and individual programmes enable the students to make good progress academically and exceptional progress in their personal development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

- The principal inspires a strong belief in the college's success, which is shared by all members of the school community. The fulfillment of every student's potential is central to the college's ethos. There is a determined commitment to drive up standards while preserving what are already strengths.
- Thorough self-evaluation draws on a wide range of information which helps the school to identify areas for development, leading to increasing accountability and improving outcomes for students. College leaders are providing good support to middle leaders in order to sharpen improvement planning in the light of information gained from regular monitoring and evaluation.
- The governing body plays a good supporting role in the school's development and has been instrumental in ensuring that very high-quality safeguarding practices complement the outstanding care, guidance and support in the school. Every care is taken to ensure that the school is safe and that policies and procedures are rigorous and meticulously maintained.
- The governing body is working hard with college leaders to bring the quality of academic outcomes into line with other outcomes. Consequently, their confidence and expertise in evaluating the performance of the college in relation to national expectations, stretching targets and in holding it to account, are growing.
- The promotion of equality and acknowledgement of diversity is evident throughout the work of the college and proudly sits at its heart. The way that the school has adapted its provision, resources and equipment for students with physical difficulties, enabling them to play a full role in every facet of school life, typifies the excellence in this area.
- The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. Its strengths are in well-established international links and its engagement with the local community, particularly through its promotion of community sport and health-related activities. The school is developing its strategy to improve students' engagement with other communities across Britain.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

A lower-than-average percentage of parents and carers responded to the Ofsted questionnaire. Most are happy with their child's experience at the college, the quality of teaching and how well the college is led and managed. Parents and carers are particularly appreciative of how well the college meets the particular needs of individuals, ensures that all children are safe, healthy, well prepared for the future and able to enjoy school. A small minority of the parents and carers raised concerns about behaviour in some lessons as well as the effectiveness with which the school enables them to support their child's learning. The inspection team judged that behaviour was good in and around the college during this inspection, thanks to the quality of provision and procedures that are in place. They also judged that the college works extremely hard to communicate information about students' progress and provides regular opportunities for parents and carers to discuss teaching and learning. Because the college is consistently striving for improvement, it has taken on board these suggestions and recognises that it needs to persist in finding the most effective ways to communicate with all parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Luke's Science and Sports College 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 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 982 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	47	45	46	5	5	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	46	47	51	52	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	23	23	52	53	10	10	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	35	48	49	5	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	32	33	58	59	2	2	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	24	52	53	13	13	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	33	58	59	4	4	1	1
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)	33	34	55	56	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	35	58	59	4	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	24	24	57	58	12	12	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	18	60	61	8	8	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	31	32	58	59	3	3	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	45	50	51	2	2	2	2

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 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



4 October 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of St Luke's Science and Sports College, Exeter EX1 3RD

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to talk to us during the recent inspection. We enjoyed meeting you and learning about the work of your school, which we have judged to be good. The school has worked really hard since the last inspection to improve your achievement. Your principal leads the school well, and is ably supported by other staff and the governing body. They are all determined that you should have the opportunity to succeed and their work enables you to achieve good outcomes. You told us how much you appreciated the work of your teachers.

You enjoy coming to school, are extremely well cared for, have a good range of curricular opportunities and are well taught. You particularly appreciate the positive benefits that science and sports status has brought in helping you to stay healthy and prepare you for life beyond school. You told us you feel very safe, and we think your behaviour in and around the school is good. You are polite, friendly and make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school and the wider community.

The school's leaders are working to monitor and improve the consistency of lesson quality, and are aware that in some subject areas your lessons do not always challenge you or help you to progress as quickly as you could. In order to improve the school further, we have asked them to focus on improving teaching so that it is more consistently good or outstanding. We have asked that teachers share their best ideas and learn from each other so that lessons consistently provide you with challenging learning activities which engage you more actively in learning and allow you to explain your ideas and deepen your understanding. We have also asked that teachers consistently give you high quality feedback on your work so that you always know exactly what you need to do to improve in each subject.

All of you can certainly help your teachers with some of these things.

With best wishes for your future happiness and success.

Yours sincerely

Karl Sampson

Her Majesty's Inspector

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