

St Georges VA Church Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134830
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	360641
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Colin Lee

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	261
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. Peter Lynch
Headteacher	Sandra Medley
Date of previous school inspection	12 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and saw nine teachers. They observed the school's work and looked at the data the school has collected on pupils' attainment and progress, the school development plan, school planning documents, and procedures for keeping pupils safe. Meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors spoke to a number of parents and carers, and analysed 63 questionnaires completed by them.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The impact of initiatives to improve attainment and progress in mathematics in Years 3 to 6, particularly by girls.
- The provision for more-able pupils and its impact on their progress.
- The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly the balance of indoor and outdoor learning.

Information about the school

The school is an average-sized primary school with a nursery providing 56 places that children attend for half-day sessions. From Reception onwards, pupils are taught in seven classes, one for each year group. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The range of these needs is wide and includes physical disability, speech, language and communication difficulties and behavioural, emotional and social problems. The school has awards for several aspects of its work, most recently receiving the Artsmark Gold award for its high quality work in the creative arts.

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

This is a good school. It has maintained continuous improvement in its provision and the outcomes for pupils since the last inspection and now has some outstanding features. Staff and pupils are proud of the school and most parents and carers are pleased with the good quality of education it provides. The headteacher's good leadership provides a drive and ambition for improvement that is shared by all and this strong sense of teamwork is a cornerstone of the school's success.

Children make good progress from the moment they start the Early Years Foundation Stage, where their attainment on entry is broadly at expected levels. There has been a steady rise over time in attainment by the end of Year 6, which is now above average. Behaviour is an outstanding feature of pupils' personal development, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their moral code is very strong and they place great emphasis on cooperation and kindness. Most pupils say that they feel extremely safe at school. They know that they are valued and they enjoy the opportunities to contribute to the school and local communities. They love physical activity and have a good understanding of its importance and of the need for healthy eating as the basis for a healthy lifestyle.

Teaching is good overall, and some of it is outstanding, and this helps all pupils to achieve well. Pupils very obviously enjoy the learning opportunities provided by an exciting curriculum that strongly emphasises first-hand experiences. There is some inconsistency between teachers in the use of ongoing assessment in lessons by both staff and pupils. Consequently, pupils' progress slows down when their understanding of what is to be learned is not checked often enough.

Leaders and managers at all levels drive improvement well. A well-planned programme of monitoring by senior and subject leaders is driving up the quality of teaching. The governing body's monitoring of school improvement and good working relationships with staff have a positive impact on the day-to-day life of the school as well as the strategic planning for the future. Arrangements for the safeguarding of children are secure. The school is a harmonious community but its strategy to promote community cohesion at the national and global levels is at an early stage of development. The lack of direct links with schools or communities in the United Kingdom or overseas limits pupils' understanding of others' lives in these contexts.

The whole staff are involved in evaluating the school's strengths and weaknesses in order to identify key areas for development. This has led to important changes that have improved the school. For example, with very effective leadership the initiatives to improve attainment in mathematics by girls in Years 3 to 6 have been very successful and have raised attainment significantly. Where pupils' past education has had serious disruption owing to circumstances outside the school's control, senior leaders have ensured that

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these pupils have had teaching and support of the highest quality. This has helped the pupils considerably in their personal development as well as ensuring that they make rapid academic progress. With outcomes and many aspects of provision having improved well since the last inspection, this shows that there is a good capacity for improvement in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning, and improve pupils' progress, by ensuring greater consistency in the use of assessment by both teachers and pupils to check pupils' understanding of what they are learning.
- Extend the promotion of community cohesion to include more opportunities for pupils to engage with schools or communities in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils have a very obvious enthusiasm for learning that was seen in nearly every lesson. Their positive attitudes are a key reason for their good achievement and improving progress. There is strong emphasis on pupils working collaboratively and this has a marked effect on the quality of learning as well as on their social skills. 'It's your turn now', and 'What do you think?' were regularly heard in a Year 6 mathematics lesson among a group using a computer and the interactive whiteboard for their work on three-dimensional shapes. Pupils work hard and sustain enthusiasm. Most of a morning in Year 2 was devoted to a literacy topic of characterisation in stories. Pupils showed the same lively enthusiasm at the end of this outstanding session, when they wrote their own descriptions of a character in their own families, as they had done in the stimulating drama activities at the start. Attendance is broadly average, which does not reflect the positive attitudes of pupils. Poor attendance is confined to a few pupils and in most cases it is gradually improving as a result of the school working closely with the families.

Children start school with attainment at typical levels in all areas except language development, which is lower. All groups of pupils are meeting the high expectations set for their progress and this is driving attainment upwards. The more-able pupils enjoy the high level of challenge in their work. This has been a recent focus of provision across the school and it is accelerating the progress of these pupils rapidly. More generally, many pupils are achieving high levels in art and music. These subjects are significant strengths and pupils' work shows both technical excellence and a very spiritual quality, for example as was experienced in singing both during the inspection and in video evidence.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities generally make as much progress as their peers. Skilled support, particularly by teaching assistants, is a key reason for these pupils' success in achieving the specific targets set for them. Similarly good progress is made by the few pupils with English as an additional language. Their progress is aided by teaching assistants making good use of word books created to help the pupils with the technical language in subjects like mathematics.

Pupils' feeling of being completely safe in school reflects not only the good quality of care but also pupils' consideration of the needs of others. All try hard to follow the behaviour code. Those who have emotional or behavioural difficulties are helped by the example set by other pupils. Pupils are very eager to contribute to school life and thrive on the

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responsibilities given to them, for example as school councillors or members of the Eco committee. Pupils have an excellent understanding of other cultures and faith groups. The many good or better outcomes in pupils' personal development and good basic literacy and numeracy skills mean that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

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

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?

Many lessons include a high degree of collaboration between teachers and support staff. This not only provides an excellent model of cooperation for pupils to follow but it also enables an innovative approach to the curriculum to be taught. For several days each week lessons are organised with three different subjects being taught at the same time, with a pupil group and an adult allocated to each one. Groups then rotate round these activities in the course of a day. This is a comparatively new development and its impact is not fully apparent. Several factors are already making this approach successful, most especially the thoroughness of the planning and the ability of the teaching assistants to take on this level of responsibility. Teaching is sharply focused on achieving a high quality of learning and pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn in each lesson. The strong emphasis on learning through practical activity and first-hand experience makes learning exciting for pupils. One reason for the excellent behaviour is the fact that pupils get so involved in their work.

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Teachers use a range of assessment strategies, such as target setting and self- and peer-assessment by pupils. However, teachers are inconsistent in their use of these strategies to check pupils' progress and their readiness for the next stage. In some classes, self-assessment is confined to the end of lessons and is often a very simple process, such as thumbs up or down to show if pupils have achieved the learning intentions. The process is far more evaluative in Year 6, and other pupils have shown they are ready for more detailed reflection on their learning. For example, Year 5 pupils provided thoughtful ideas in a gymnastics lesson on the good features of the performance of others as well as constructive ideas on how improvement could be achieved.

The curriculum is enriched well by frequent use of educational visits and visitors to the school to support pupils' learning. There is a good range of clubs and activities outside the school day. From cooking club to drama, art to football, many are oversubscribed and all provide a hugely popular extension of learning opportunities for pupils.

The good quality of pastoral care, guidance and support impacts very well on pupils' personal development, particularly social skills. The needs of the significant number of vulnerable pupils are fully met and there is extra help and support for these and all other pupils whenever they need it. The school works very closely with families, providing support for any parents or carers seeking help or advice. There is some variability, however, in adults' knowledge of child protection procedures.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school leadership team drives school improvement very effectively. Senior leaders and staff work closely together to monitor the impact of school improvement measures, which are the product of ongoing, rigorous self-evaluation. However, some of these judgements are ambitious and anticipate the impact of initiatives that are not yet fully embedded, for example in the curriculum. All staff contribute well to this self-evaluation process and, as a result, the school knows itself well.

School leaders promote equal opportunities well and have effective measures to eradicate any form of discrimination. This ensures that all groups make good progress. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. It works hard at integrating all pupils into the school and local communities but has yet to establish sufficient links with national and international communities to help pupils fully understand the similarities and differences of their lives in these contexts.

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The school makes the most of its close links with local churches, as well as its work with other schools, professional and community organisations. The development of good home-school links is another of these key partnerships that have been used to enhance the quality of pupils' learning and their well-being. Further development of links with parents and carers is recognised as necessary. The plan to extend the learning diaries used in the Early Years Foundation Stage throughout the school is set to address a concern of some parents and carers by providing more guidance on supporting pupils' learning as well as keeping them up to date with progress.

Governors have effective strategies to make them fully informed about the life of the school and they contribute knowledgeably to planning for school improvement. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements are thorough and that staff are appropriately and regularly trained in attending to health and safety, risk assessment and child protection issues.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good provision and leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage help children to progress well from the moment they start in the Nursery. This good progress continues throughout the Reception year and the majority of children start Year 1 with attainment above average in nearly all areas of learning. In both classes, children experience a rich curriculum that, together with consistently good teaching, results in children's great enjoyment of school.

Staff in each class work very closely together, showing high levels of concern for children's welfare. All staff carry out ongoing assessments of children's learning by recording observations of their successes and areas for development. This is a particular strength in

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provision and the assessment information is used very well to plan activities tailored to the needs of individual children. Most children quickly develop the confidence to work independently, as was seen when Nursery children work at the computer. They are inquisitive and love learning new things. They talk excitedly about their discoveries. This all stems from learning opportunities both indoors and outdoors being well planned, with a good balance of activities led by adults and activities that children initiate for themselves.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires, or who spoke to inspectors, are happy with the school, and are particularly clear that it keeps their children safe and helps them to adopt healthy lifestyles. Many questionnaires had additional, positive comments that praised the quality of teaching. A higher-than-average level of dissatisfaction was expressed about the information provided about pupils' progress, particularly the fact that there is only one formal meeting with teachers each year. The school stresses that its 'open door' policy enables any concerns to be raised and addressed immediately. Parents and carers are said to be encouraged to make appointments to see teachers if a more formal meeting is required. The school sees these arrangements as a means whereby issues such as progress can be discussed. However, there are insufficient reminders to parents and carers through newsletters, notices or the school website that these possibilities exist. Having learned of these concerns, the school is reviewing policy and considering an increase in the number of formal progress meetings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Georges VA Church Primary 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 63 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 261 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	48	31	49	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	56	27	43	0	0	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	10	16	35	56	14	22	3	5
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	27	39	62	5	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	30	41	65	3	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	22	36	57	12	19	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	46	32	51	2	3	0	0
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)	12	19	43	68	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	25	42	67	3	5	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	17	36	57	9	14	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	17	39	62	8	12	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	23	37	37	59	2	3	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	43	32	51	4	6	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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 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 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.

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 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.



14 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Georges VA Church Primary School, Weston-super-Mare BS22 7SA

I am writing to thank you for helping us during the inspection of your school. We especially enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views. We have taken these views into account in writing this report. St Georges VA Church Primary School is a good school. Here are some of the main findings from the report.

- You said how much you enjoy school and we saw that in your enthusiasm in lessons and your ability to work hard.
- All of you are making good progress and your work is of a good standard, particularly in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and we also saw some very high standards in art and music.
- You are taught well and teachers plan a good curriculum that gives you many exciting learning opportunities. We have asked teachers to keep checking on how well you are learning during lessons and also to encourage you to think about how you can improve.
- Your behaviour is excellent and we saw how well you all look out for one another. This makes your school a very happy place that everyone enjoys going to.
- You do many jobs around the school that help it run smoothly and you make a good contribution to the local community. We want the school to set up links with schools and organisations in the United Kingdom and abroad to help you learn about people's lives in these places.
- You say you feel very safe in school ♦ this is because all the adults do a good job in looking after you and making sure that get help whenever you need it.
- The headteacher and many other teachers provide good leadership and management and all the adults work well together to help the school to improve.

Thank you once again for your help during our visit, and best wishes for your work in the future. We hope you will carry on working hard, enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make St Georges to be an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Colin Lee

Lead inspector

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