

St George's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112918
Local Authority	Derby
Inspection number	357220
Inspection dates	23–24 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Kenneth Thomas

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	329
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Alan Burbidge
Headteacher	Patricia Hurd
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 teachers and saw 19 lessons. Inspectors observed a school assembly and held discussions with staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the member with responsibility for safeguarding. They looked at pupils' books and viewed a wide range of documentation including: school policies, curriculum planning, self-evaluation information, improvement planning, safeguarding and welfare arrangements and records of pupils' progress. Questionnaires returned by 94 parents and carers, 172 pupils and 31 members of staff were analysed.

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

- To what extent is the school able to demonstrate that attainment is rising and that the progress of all groups of pupils is at least satisfactory?
- How well do teachers use assessment information to plan learning tasks that challenge and extend pupils of all abilities?
- Is the school's work to develop a 'creative curriculum' having an impact on outcomes?
- Do leaders and managers at all levels have a realistic view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the capacity to drive improvement?

Information about the school

This is an above average sized primary school with slightly more boys than girls on roll. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Just over one-third of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. This is above the national average. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language, two of whom are in the early stages of learning the language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. The school has received recognition for its work in several areas and has achieved National Healthy School status, together with the Activemark, Musicmark and Investor in People awards.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St George's Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory and steadily improving quality of education for its pupils. The school is justly proud of its inclusive nature and its place in the community. A caring Christian ethos is immediately evident on entering the school and this underpins pupils' good personal development, particularly their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are well behaved, have positive attitudes towards their learning and enjoy coming to school. They willingly accept the many opportunities to take responsibility and make good contributions to the school and community. Shared values influence every aspect of school life and pupils feel safe because staff know them exceptionally well, and provide good levels of care. This is recognised by parents and carers. The very large majority of those who replied to the inspection questionnaire expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school and their children's experience. As one said, 'My child has settled in well because the teachers have been so welcoming.'

Inspection evidence shows that current attainment is average and that achievement is satisfactory, given pupils' original starting points. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved considerably and is now good. Children quickly settle into the day-to-day life of the school, make good progress and enjoy the range of activities on offer. Because a great deal has been done to improve the quality of teaching and learning, much is good in the school as a whole. However, this quality is not yet found consistently through Key Stages 1 and 2 and this is the main reason why progress is satisfactory rather than better. More effective use is being made of assessment information to identify underperformance and provide targeted support. Not enough use is being made of this information, though, to provide suitably challenging work that matches the abilities of all groups of pupils, particularly those capable of attaining higher levels. In some lessons, pupils and teaching assistants are passively engaged for lengthy periods because teachers' introductions are too long and too few checks are made on pupils' progress so that learning can be moved on more rapidly. One notable aspect of the school's care for individual pupils is the effective support provided for any who may be in vulnerable circumstances to ensure that they keep up with classmates. Attendance, although average, is improving because of the meticulous way in which all absences from school are pursued.

The headteacher, with good support from staff and the governing body, is giving clear direction to the school and more challenging targets are being set to secure further improvement. In order to further accelerate progress, a more creative topic-based curriculum has been introduced. This is proving more stimulating and engaging pupils' interest, particularly that of boys. However, there is inconsistency in the extent to which teachers focus on the application and development of basic skills in topic work. While school self-evaluation identifies the correct areas for improvement, the evaluation of a few aspects is over-generous because it is not sufficiently focused on pupils' learning and on

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measuring the impact of improvement initiatives. A positive feature of school leadership is the increased responsibility being given to middle leaders for monitoring the quality of provision and ensuring pupils make good progress. While staff are responding to these responsibilities with enthusiasm, their monitoring is not, as yet, identifying with enough clarity the specific steps that teachers need to take to ensure pupils make more rapid progress. Nevertheless, the determination of the headteacher, staff and the governing body to tackle weaknesses and move the school forward, together with the improvements seen since the last inspection, gives the school satisfactory capacity for continued improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make all teaching good or better to accelerate progress by ensuring that:
 - full use is made of assessment information to plan learning tasks that are suitably challenging for all groups of pupils, particularly those capable of attaining higher levels
 - pupils and teaching assistants are actively engaged from the outset of lessons
 - more effective use is made of questioning to assess pupils' understanding and extend their thinking and reasoning skills.
- Improve the curriculum by ensuring that there is a consistent emphasis on the application of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in relevant and challenging ways in all topic work.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - monitoring and evaluation are clearly focused on pupils' learning and the impact of strategies to raise attainment
 - middle leaders have the skills necessary to identify what individual teachers need to do to make sure that pupils' progress is consistently good.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

When children join Reception, the skills of many in all areas of learning are below those usually found in children of their age, and this is particularly the case in communication, language and literacy. Nevertheless, because the school is very attentive to individual needs, effective adult support ensures that learning is good for all groups of pupils. As a result, by the time pupils enter Year 1, most are well on the way to achieving the Early Learning Goals. While achievement in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall, progress is often good in the later years because more challenging teaching encourages quicker learning. Pupils' work in lessons and in their workbooks indicates standards are generally as expected for their age at this stage of the academic year. A school focus on improving reading and writing is having a positive impact on standards in English, which are generally consistent with age-related expectations for this stage of the academic year. Particular attention is now being given to mathematics, where attainment is lagging

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behind English. It is clear that while the progress of pupils from all social backgrounds, including those with minority ethnic heritage and with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is satisfactory overall, good progress is made in lessons that are stimulating and engaging. In these lessons, pupils' positive attitudes to learning contribute to the progress made. This was exemplified in a Year 6 lesson where pupils worked effectively in groups to investigate the contribution of women to the war effort in the Second World War and took pleasure in discussing and sharing their findings with others. This picture is not consistent across the school and, consequently, progress is satisfactory rather than good. At times, lessons do not stimulate pupils' interest or imagination and their efforts slacken.

Pupils are considerate of each other and their good behaviour helps to make the school the calm and welcoming place it is. They demonstrate a good awareness of how to avoid risks, whether on the internet or during journeys to and from school.

Reflecting a school with National Healthy School status and the Activemark award,

- pupils understand that exercise and a balanced diet are vital to their healthy development. The school council provides a useful forum for pupils' voices and pupils contribute well to the school and wider community in other ways, for example acting as lunchtime monitors or raising money for a range of worthwhile causes. Pupils' average standards in basic skills and their good collaborative abilities provide a satisfactory base for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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

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How effective is the provision?

All lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils. In the very best lessons, pupils make good progress because assessment information is used well to guide the planning of learning tasks and pupils are expected to work independently, stretching themselves and others as they talk things through. Perceptive questioning is used to extend pupils' thinking and encourage the use of more varied vocabulary in their answers. This was seen in a lesson with a mixed class of Year 3 and Year 4 pupils, for example, where pupils were challenged to extend their thinking as they explored life in ancient Egypt. However, in lessons that fall below this standard, the work planned is not pitched at the correct level and progress slows because the tasks do not offer enough challenge. Good practice is evident in the marking of pupils' work that refers to targets and clearly identifies what individuals need to do next or to revisit. Particularly effective use is made of assessment information to identify underperformance and to track pupils' progress towards their targets.

The curriculum provides pupils with a satisfactory range of learning experiences. It is planned around a series of topics that enable more meaningful links to be made between subjects, while providing continuity and progression in learning across the key stages. It is enhanced by a programme of visitors to the school and visits out of school, including residential trips. Pupils also benefit from a well-attended range of extra-curricular activities. Staff work hard to involve parents in their children's learning. Strenuous efforts are made to promote regular attendance, with additional support provided for those returning after periods of absence.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides effective leadership and has made significant changes to the school since the last inspection. These changes include an extended senior leadership team with many other staff newly appointed to middle leadership roles. As a result, leadership and management are more widely shared and while many staff are relatively inexperienced in leadership roles, all are keen to make a full contribution to the drive for improvement. This is evidenced in the enthusiasm with which initiatives to improve provision and outcomes are adopted. Staff benefit from well-planned professional development that is helping to improve teaching and learning in classrooms. Close links with a number of agencies support the individual needs of pupils from a range of backgrounds. This is one aspect of the school's firm commitment to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.

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Members of the governing body have worked well with other leaders to ensure that safeguarding procedures are of good quality and all staff are well trained in these matters. As a result, the school has the full confidence of parents and carers. The governing body takes its statutory responsibilities seriously and provides the school with considerable support. Parents and carers are provided with a good range of information. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Through links with schools and other agencies in this country and abroad, pupils' minds are opened to the range and diversity of cultures in the United Kingdom and beyond.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children settle quickly on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage because of the well-organised induction arrangements and good adult care and support. As a result, children feel safe and enjoy their learning. A strong emphasis on children's personal and social skills ensures that they soon begin to share, to learn and to play together. All adults are vigilant in meeting the needs of children, and welfare requirements are fully met. Teaching is good because staff have a good understanding of how children learn and they work well as an enthusiastic team. They provide a broad range of activities to promote all areas of learning. Children have good opportunities to explore, be creative and to work independently. The teaching of letters and sounds receives good attention and children are making good progress in acquiring early writing skills.

Effective leadership and management have ensured that the Early Years Foundation Stage, judged to be satisfactory at the last inspection, is now good. This is because the accommodation provides a much improved learning environment and adults share a vision about what can be done to enhance children's learning experiences. Staff are now in the

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process of developing the outdoors so that outdoor learning activities reflect the quality of those indoors.

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 very large majority of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaire indicated they are very happy with their children's experience at the school. They are particularly pleased with safety in school, the sense of enjoyment, the quality of teaching, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, the information they receive on their children's progress and the leadership of the school. A very small minority of parents and carers do not believe that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that the overwhelming majority of pupils are well behaved and that any instances of inappropriate behaviour are effectively managed by staff.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St George's Catholic 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 94 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 320 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	52	41	44	2	2	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	41	44	47	50	4	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	40	54	57	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	35	55	59	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	39	54	57	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	40	43	50	53	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	34	57	61	2	2	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)	34	36	51	54	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	36	48	51	5	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	33	51	54	6	6	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	29	31	54	57	7	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	31	33	56	60	5	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	44	47	50	2	2	1	1

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.



25 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's Catholic Primary School, Derby, DE23 1GG

Thank you for the help you gave us with the recent inspection of your school and for the friendly way you received us. We spoke to many of you, and you were really helpful. We also want to say how much we enjoyed listening to your singing in assembly.

You receive a satisfactory education and reach average standards at the end of Year 6. You enjoy school, listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and are willing to work hard in your lessons. Your good behaviour is a considerable help to your teachers because it enables them to concentrate on making your work interesting and helping you to learn. You could reach even higher standards and we have asked your teachers to make sure that, in all of your lessons, you are really stretched, so that you make the best progress you possibly can. We have also asked that teachers make more frequent checks on your learning in lessons. Your teachers spend a lot of time marking your work and you can help yourselves to make more progress by making sure that you try hard to follow the advice you are given.

Most of you understand the importance of being healthy, eat sensibly and take part in physical activities regularly. Your teachers plan a good range of visits and after-school activities that broaden your experiences. You told us how much you enjoy your topic work and to help you to make even better progress, we have asked that there is a more consistent emphasis on using your literacy and numeracy skills in this work. We were impressed with how you all do so much to help the school, especially those who help at playtimes and those of you involved in making decisions through the school council. Adults at school look after you well, so that you are safe and happy. Your headteacher, all the other staff and the governing body are determined to make things even better. To help this, we have asked that staff responsible for checking the work of the school help your teachers to make sure that you make the best progress you can in all your lessons. We think that everyone at St George's can work together to do these things and that you will want to play your part by working hard.

Yours sincerely

Dr Kenneth Thomas
Lead inspector

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