

# George Street Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117106
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	358083
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Tusha Chakraborti

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	219
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jon Estell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Debra Lamb
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	George Street Hemel Hempstead HP2 5HJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 255638
<b>Fax number</b>	01442 262 720
<b>Email address</b>	admin@georgestreet.herts.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 12 lessons taught by nine different teachers in the seven classes. Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff, pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's improvement plans, policy documents, pupils' work, records of the monitoring of teaching and learning, minutes of the governing body's meetings and safeguarding documentation. They also scrutinised responses to the inspection questionnaires from 134 parents and carers, 95 pupils and 16 staff.

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

What are the current rates of progress throughout the school?

- How effective are the strategies being employed to raise attainment and eradicate underachievement, especially that of boys?
- How effectively do staff use assessment information to meet the needs of all groups of pupils and to set challenging targets?
- How rigorous and effective is the school's self evaluation in identifying the quality of leadership and management at all levels and the further steps for improvement?

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school with a higher than average proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals. The very large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average while the proportion of those who speak English as an additional language is average. Very few are at the early stages of learning English. The school holds Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in the Nursery and the Reception classes.

**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 and has improved significantly since the last inspection. Since September 2008, the school has worked closely with the local authority to provide an accurate evaluation of its effectiveness and to implement several strategies to raise standards of achievement, with particular focus on teaching and learning. Recent reviews of the school's performance by the local authority and the tracking of pupils' progress show that this work is bearing fruit and inspection findings concur with this view. The school has good capacity to make further improvement. Parents and carers recognise the school's hard work in its commitment to improving the quality of education and this is reflected in their comments. One stated, 'There has clearly been an improvement over the past two years and the school is much better now than it was a couple of years ago.'

The school is a harmonious community. Pupils behave well, develop good personal and social skills and grow up as confident learners. Staff work efficiently in close liaison with parents and carers, engaging them successfully with their children's learning and the school's work. One parent wrote, 'We really enjoy the "shared learning sessions" where we come in and join in a lesson with our children. It is great seeing the variety of ways in which our children are learning.' A strength of the school is the extent to which leaders, teachers and support staff work in close liaison with outside agencies to support all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

Children enter the Nursery with skills and experiences that are well below those expected for their age and make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the time they leave in Year 6, pupils' attainment is broadly average. Progress has accelerated over the past two years, particularly in reading and mathematics, as a result of the school's strong focus on raising standards of achievement in these two areas, and standards are beginning to rise. Achievement in writing has not been as good. However, writing has been prioritised for the current year and is already showing an improving trend. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language also are making equally good progress.

Members of staff have good relationships with pupils and have high expectations of their behaviour and work. They engage pupils well in paired and whole-class discussions that support their learning well. The most effective teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn and how this will be achieved. Teachers assess pupils' progress during lessons well through skilful questioning. They mark pupils' work regularly and ensure that they know how to improve. In the main, assessment is used effectively to plan lessons and match tasks to pupils' different abilities. Occasionally, tasks in lessons are not sufficiently challenging to extend the higher attaining pupils. As a result, these pupils do not always achieve as well as they can.

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The expertise, ambition and focus provided by the leadership team have ensured rapid improvement in key areas, including the quality of teaching and the implementation of a good assessment system. Senior leaders' self-evaluation is analytical and accurate and this successfully informs the school's priorities for improvement planning. Leadership at other levels is less well developed. The monitoring and evaluation roles of the middle leaders, including the subject leaders, are not sufficiently developed. The leadership team has prioritised this area for development and has begun to address this issue. The governors have a very clear understanding of the school's performance and provide good support and sufficient challenge to the school.

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

- Raise the standards of attainment of all pupils further, particularly in English by:
  - improving standards in writing across the school
  - using the assessment data more effectively to plan work matched to the abilities of higher attaining pupils so that they are challenged consistently and achieve as well as they can.
- Increase the capacity of leadership by improving the monitoring and evaluation roles of middle leaders.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their time at school. Assessment data, observations of lessons and pupils' work show that their progress has accelerated over the past two years as result of improved quality of teaching. They learn, develop understanding and acquire new skills at a good rate. They listen carefully to their teachers and concentrate on the tasks they are set. They enjoy 'talk partners' activities where they enthusiastically discuss their ideas in pairs before embarking on a continuous piece of writing on different topics. This is enabling them to improve their writing skills further and boys are achieving as well as the girls as a result of this strategy.

The school has rightly identified the need to develop writing skills across the curriculum to ensure that pupils are able to use a range of writing styles to write for different purposes. For example, in one English lesson, pupils evaluated several models of persuasive broadcasts and gained good understanding of the features of persuasive writing. They critically review their own writing styles and learn to edit and improve their work, using correct punctuation and imaginative use of language. Pupils enjoy reading a variety of books for finding factual information and narrating stories. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the consistent and well-targeted support they receive from all support staff, which also helps them develop their independence.

Pupils know how to keep themselves and others safe. They are confident that any concerns they raise will be dealt with effectively and immediately. They have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and most take part in a range of sporting activities organised by the school and through the school's sports partnership. They behave well and learn to respect others' values and beliefs. Their good moral and social development is reflected in their consideration and support for others. They are proud of their involvement in making decisions and enjoy taking on roles of responsibility within the

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class, through the 'Pupils' Voice' and when arranging many activities to support school and local events. They raise funds for charities and recognise the need to do so. Attendance has improved and is now average.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

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

## How effective is the provision?

The good quality teaching successfully promotes learning and enjoyment for pupils. The purpose of lessons is effectively shared with the class so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Interactive whiteboards are used well to illustrate key teaching and learning points. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and work in groups to investigate and solve problems. In most lessons, teachers use questioning effectively that engages pupils well in their learning. The teaching assistants support learning skilfully, especially that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum is well organised and contributes effectively to pupils' personal development and well-being. The school has introduced a broader and more balanced programme to help pupils to develop the full range of key skills and to ensure cross-curricular links through a thematic approach. For example, the week-long, whole-school 'creative arts' project based on Paolo Veronese's painting of 'The Family of Darius before Alexander' promoted excellent cross-curricular links. This enabled pupils, from Nursery to Year 6, to choose and work on a particular theme from the picture, such as architecture or costumes, developing good, independent learning skills. Projects like this, along with a

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range of after school clubs and sporting activities, as well as special events such as a talk by a local author, enhance pupils' enjoyment in learning well.

The school provides a very happy and welcoming learning environment for all its pupils. It works efficiently with parents and carers and outside agencies to support the learning and the well-being of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early, carefully targeted and effectively supported. The arrangements for transferring children between the key stages within the school, as well as between Year 6 and the secondary schools, are effective.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership team is successfully driving improvement and staff share a common ambition to build on what they have achieved so far. Leaders have devised strategies by which they can develop the expertise of teachers and consistently raise pupils' achievement. A thorough analysis of data enables the school to identify the action that is needed to sustain recent improvements. The governing body is effective in its work to support and challenge the school. Governors are organised and hold specific responsibilities for monitoring the work of the school. As a result, there is a good, shared understanding of the priorities of the school's improvement plan and a high commitment to the actions necessary for them to be realised.

The school is highly committed to eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all its pupils and this has ensured improvement in the performance of different groups of pupils, such as boys. The school has successfully developed a strong partnership with parents and carers, involving them increasingly in their children's education. Safeguarding procedures illustrate good practice. Clear policies and strategies, ensuring that pupils are safe, are monitored regularly. Community cohesion operates well at the school and local level, but progress is slower in promoting understanding of diversity within the wider society. The school is very successful in liaising with outside agencies and local schools, and this supports pupils' learning and well-being effectively. The school manages its budget efficiently and provides good value for money.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Staff form very good relationships with children. Behaviour is good and well managed by all adults. An attractive learning environment, with vibrant displays and a good range of resources, interests and engages children well. As a result, children enjoy their learning, progress well and many reach broadly average standards by the time they enter Key Stage 1.

Children learn through exciting, and well planned activities in a safe and stimulating environment. They settle in well and develop good attitudes to learning. They develop good co-ordination and personal skills as they explore the activities in the indoor and outdoor areas. They respond well to adults and are eager to share ideas. A wide range of practical activities is planned to stimulate the children's imagination and to extend their speaking and listening skills. For example, they listen to the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' and talk about different tastes when they make porridge for the Three Bears. They learn to use scissors and compare sizes by cutting out bears' faces. They develop their early data handling skills by comparing information about which breakfasts they enjoy. They are encouraged to be independent learners. For example, they take responsibility for putting away the resources, and they respond well to the change of activities.

Children's welfare and safety are given the highest priority. The school works very successfully in close partnership with families through a good induction system and regular sessions when parents and carers come in to work with their children. Good leadership and management have resulted in effective teamwork.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 proportion of parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaire was high. The vast majority of them report that their children enjoy school and they are very pleased with their children's experience in this school. They appreciate that the school keeps their children safe and ensures that pupils develop good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Several parents and carers comment that the headteacher is 'very approachable' and staff are 'fantastic'. Most parents and carers feel that they are well informed about their children's progress. A very small minority is concerned about pupils' behaviour and bullying. The inspectors looked into these concerns. They found that pupils' behaviour is good, that any inappropriate behaviour is dealt with well and that any rare incident of bullying is dealt with immediately and effectively.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at George Street 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 134 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 219 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	84	63	49	37	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	86	64	46	34	0	0	2	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	72	54	56	42	6	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	44	62	46	12	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	72	54	59	44	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	50	56	42	9	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	44	70	52	2	1	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)	48	36	70	52	8	6	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	58	43	65	49	6	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	46	53	40	12	9	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	31	75	56	6	4	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	65	49	57	43	6	4	3	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	71	53	54	40	6	4	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	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



10 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of George Street Primary School, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 5HJ**

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. We were pleased to see how much you enjoy school. We agree with you that your teachers take good care of you. You behave well and are always keen to help each other. You carry out your duties, including the special jobs as house captains and 'Pupil Voice' representatives, responsibly. Thank you also for the questionnaires that you filled in for the inspection and for sharing your views with us.

Your school is providing you with a good education. As a result, you make good progress and the majority of you reach the standards expected by the time you leave Year 6. To improve your school further, we have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- make sure that you are able to improve your writing skills further
- make sure that the work provided for you is just a bit harder to move your learning forward as rapidly as possible, especially those of you who learn quickly
- make sure that different teachers take on responsibility for leading some of the improvements in your school.

I am sure that you and your teachers will work hard to make these improvements. You can help the school to get even better by working hard and attending regularly, so that your school continues to be a happy place.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Tusha Chakraborti

Lead Inspector

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