

# St George's CE Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 118844              |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Kent                |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 358456              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 10–11 February 2011 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Glynis Bradley-Peat |

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>                     | Voluntary aided  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 242  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Barry Birch  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Howard Fisher  |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 13 October 2008  |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Chequers Road<br>Minster, Sheppey<br>Sheppy, Kent ME12 3QU |
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|--------------------------|---------------------|
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, observed 11 teachers and held meetings with the headteacher, senior leadership team, teaching staff, governors and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books. They checked documents including the school improvement plan, systems for tracking pupils' progress, safeguarding documentation and school policies. They also analysed information from 85 questionnaires from parents and carers, in addition to those received from staff and pupils.

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

- The current progress of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils and their standards of attainment.
- The extent to which girls achieve.
- Whether leaders are able to demonstrate satisfactory capacity to improve, taking into account the number of new leaders and an inexperienced governing body.
- Whether the new senior leadership team are embedding ambition and driving forward improvement across the school.

## Information about the school

St George's CE Primary School is of average-size but growing rapidly. At the time of the previous inspection the school was a middle school and of completely different character. During the academic year 2009/2010, the school was in a period of transition. In September 2009 there were only 67 children on the school roll but 83 children joined the school during the year, some entering Year 6 at various times. The school will eventually admit 420 pupils. The headteacher took up post in April 2009 and appointed two assistant headteachers in January 2011.

There is provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in two Reception classes. Pupils come from predominantly White British backgrounds, with a very small minority from a variety of other heritages. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Their needs are mostly related to behavioural and emotional difficulties and speech and language difficulties. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is just below average. There is onsite provision for a nursery which is not managed by the governing body.

The school has gained Healthy School Status.

**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 CE Primary School provides a satisfactory and improving standard of education for its pupils. None of the pupils in the school currently were in the school at the time of the previous inspection. This is because St George's Primary School changed from a middle school. For all intents and purposes it is a new school but retains its original name. Therefore the areas for improvement set for the old school are no longer appropriate. The new senior leadership team are already working well together to move the school forward and have engaged both staff and parents and carers well in the process. All staff, without exception, share the vision for the future of the school and report in their questionnaires that it is 'well led and managed'. One parent/carer wrote, 'My child has not been at the school very long, but really enjoys it and is very happy. I'm also very happy with how the school is run.' This mirrors the sentiments of most parents and carers. Senior leaders are aware of the strengths and weaknesses through their satisfactory self-evaluation and are making improvements as a result. They have tackled issues in mathematics well through a focus on investigative problem solving. Pupils' attainment in writing is also rising but standards in reading have dipped with too many pupils making insufficient progress. However, overall, there is secure evidence, especially in the effective work with parent and carers, to demonstrate a satisfactory capacity for improvement.

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a good start to school. Children make good progress and learn well because independence is encouraged through a wide range of well-planned activities. Throughout the rest of the school, progress is satisfactory but uneven across year groups and subjects. This is clearly linked with the quality of teaching. There are some significant strengths in teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6 but in some other year groups there are occasionally low expectations of what pupils can achieve and examples of teachers talking for too long. Teaching is not yet consistently good enough to accelerate progress in a small minority of classes. In addition, teaching assistants do not always support learning well enough because they are not proactive and are sometimes too slow to react to pupils' needs. As a result progress for a small minority of pupils slows. ♦♦

Although the leadership and management of teaching and learning are satisfactory, teachers are not always held to account rigorously enough for the progress their pupils make. This is because the new tracking system in the school is still unfamiliar and teachers are not always clearly aware of the progress their pupils make. The headteacher already has plans in place to train staff to use the system effectively. The satisfactory governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met including those for safeguarding. Many of them are new to their responsibilities and lack experience. They support the school well and are beginning to ask questions about the school's performance and to act as critical friends. However, they rely heavily on information given

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to them by the headteacher and are not able to hold the school to account as rigorously as they would like. Again, senior leaders are aware of this and have identified their training needs.

Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes enhance their learning. They are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their education and develop workplace and other skills. While the school has put systems in place to raise attendance, a number of families persist in taking their children away during school time on holidays despite the school's efforts to dissuade them. These systems are beginning to secure improvements in attendance and parents and carers involved are beginning to realise that when children are not in school, they cannot learn which adversely affects their achievement. Most pupils are keen to adopt a healthy lifestyle and know, for example, the impact of eating well and taking regular exercise on healthy lifestyles. They know how to stay safe, for example when working on the internet.

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.

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

- Improve attendance by:
  - ensuring a less tolerant approach to holidays in term-time
  - ensuring both pupils and their families appreciate and understand the explicit link between achievement and attendance.
- Build upon the good start already made to raise attainment in English and mathematics by:
  - improving currently satisfactory teaching so it becomes consistently good
  - ensuring that teaching assistants are clearly directed by teachers and develop a more proactive approach in the classroom
  - ensuring all staff receive training to use the new tracking system effectively
  - rigorously holding teachers to account for the progress their pupils make.
- Support the development of the governing body by:
  - ensuring governors receive additional training so that they can hold the school to account more effectively.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Progress across the rest of the school is uneven after a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is the result of some previously inadequate teaching which is now resolved. In addition there is a significant number of new staff who joined the school in January and are only just beginning to know the pupils in their classes. Currently, teaching is not always consistently good enough to overcome the constant challenge of increasing numbers of pupils starting at the school on an almost daily basis. Currently, the school's own tracking data for Year 6 shows that pupils are on track to meet targets that are close to last year's national average in mathematics and writing but in reading too many pupils are not making sufficient progress to reach their potential. Those pupils with special

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educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. Although girls made noticeably less progress than boys last year and attained lower standards, this trend is not evident in the current performance data. Girls now make similar progress to boys and are on track to achieve average standards. ♦

The vast majority of pupils enjoy school. They collaborate and work well together in pairs and groups to investigate and solve problems. In a good mathematics lesson in a mixed Years 5 and 6 class, pupils worked enthusiastically to make the number 50 with a variety of other numbers. Although the activity was particularly challenging pupils persevered and the quality of their discussion was high. Progress was good, particularly when the teacher prompted pupils to adjust their strategies. When answering questions, pupils are confident and articulate their ideas well. However, occasionally, there are instances where expectations of pupils are not high enough so they do not learn as well as they should. In addition, extended teacher talk in a few lessons prohibits the time pupils have to work independently. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Pupils show respect for each other and are thoughtful and kind. They have the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the school community and say that their views are listened to and acted upon. For example, the school council contributed to decision making about the structure of their new school and actively consulted on and designed their adventure playground.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:  |          |
| Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 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        |
| <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>   | 4        |
| <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

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## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is inconsistent across year groups and subjects. There are good examples of teaching. In a mixed Years 5 and 6 mathematics lesson the teacher taught explicitly, the key skills needed for investigative problem solving. This ensured that pupils adopted the correct approach to solving questions about algebraic sequencing and ratio. Pupils were keen and eager to learn. They achieved well and made good progress. Generally teachers' marking is helpful and gives advice about how to make work better next time. Sometimes the impact is not as good as it could be because teachers do not always give pupils sufficient time to reflect on the comments made. Occasionally, pupils lose interest because teachers spend too long talking rather than allowing them to work independently. In too many lessons teaching assistants do not support learning well enough and sit for too long inactive.

The satisfactory but developing curriculum is increasing engagement and enjoyment of learning through practical tasks including creative opportunities through art, drama and music. For example, pupils enjoyed the project work to explore Britain in the 1950's and weekly drumming sessions enable pupils to develop an appreciation of music. Purposeful projects to explore ways of improving the quality of the environment through planting bulbs, recycling, and using local supermarket vouchers to purchase eco-friendly equipment are developing pupils' enterprise skills. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra activities and visits which contribute well to the encouragement of healthy lifestyles.

The school is a welcoming and caring environment. Pupils feel safe and all staff share collective responsibility for the welfare of the pupils. Parents' and carers' views demonstrate confidence in the school's ability to protect their children. The established network of internal support, such as the active role of the play therapist in managing behaviour, is a strength of the provision. Well-organised induction arrangements facilitate new pupils' smooth integration into school. The direct support of the teaching assistants in the classroom is not as effective as it could be. Although there are a number of strategies to improve attendance, some are recent and the full impact has yet to be felt but initial signs are encouraging.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The good leadership of the headteacher is embedding the ambition for the future of the school with his new senior leadership team and all staff including a significant number who have just joined the school. Together, they currently drive forward improvement

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satisfactorily. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are not yet robust enough. As a result, the quality of teaching in some year groups has not promoted good progress. The new tracking system is not yet an effective tool for driving improvement as many teachers do not use it well enough. Lesson observation is a strong feature and gives clear points for improvement to staff which are reviewed. Systems for ensuring that teachers are held accountable for the progress pupils make are less well developed. The governing body is becoming more effective but many members are new and inexperienced. However, they support the school satisfactorily and are learning to develop their other roles including promoting community cohesion. The school has a sound understanding of its context and is beginning to work well with the local community. The school has a clear ethos of equality of opportunity for all and overcomes discrimination. This is shown by the school's commitment to ensuring girls achieve as well as boys. Safeguarding is good because the school pays due diligence to all aspects. There are effective policies and procedures to safeguard pupils and all adults are vetted and checked before working in the school. The school has engaged well with parents and carers and questionnaires indicate overwhelming support. The school considers parents and carers to be paramount in helping the future development of the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 3        |
| <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>3</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>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>   | <b>3</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>3</b> |

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children come from a variety of pre-school settings and about half have had no experience of formal education. Children enter the school with skills which are well below the levels expected of most four-year-olds especially in the areas of personal and creative development and language and literacy. The school sets up individualised learning programmes and by the end of Reception good progress has been made. Children are encouraged to take initiative and are given time to explore their personal areas of interest. Behaviour is generally good and staff handle issues with sensitivity to resolve any issues.



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Development of collaborative learning is good and adults are committed to ensure that groups are given every opportunity to work together. Good opportunities are presented to ensure that children can organise their own learning environment and tidy up afterwards. They are given opportunities to respond to questioning with confidence. Children play and learn in a safe environment. They are reminded about their responsibilities, sharing, fairness and kindness. Sanctions are discharged with compassion but fairness with the intention always of enabling the child to see for themselves what they have done wrong. The school works to a creative curriculum design and creates some memorable experiences for the children. For example, the children grow and pick their own produce which they cook and sell to other classes, adults and parents in the school. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Strengths and weaknesses are correctly identified and current actions are bringing about improvements to teaching.

*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

A minority of parents and carers returned the questionnaires but the majority of these were extremely positive about the school overall. The vast majority say that their child enjoys school. Almost all believe the school is well led and managed, that their children are safe in school and that their child is helped to have a healthy lifestyle. Most feel that the school meets the needs of their child and that they make enough progress. The very large majority believe the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour and that their concerns and suggestions are taken account of. There was little disagreement with any of the statements in the questionnaire. A very small minority did not feel they were informed well enough about their children's progress. Inspectors brought this to the school's attention.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St George's CE 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 85 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 242 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |   | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | % | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 60             | 71 | 23    | 27 | 2        | 2 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 60             | 71 | 24    | 28 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress  | 49             | 58 | 25    | 29 | 8        | 9 | 0                 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 51             | 60 | 27    | 32 | 2        | 2 | 1                 | 1 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 51             | 60 | 28    | 33 | 4        | 5 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 50             | 59 | 28    | 33 | 4        | 5 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 48             | 56 | 32    | 38 | 3        | 4 | 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) | 31             | 36 | 36    | 42 | 1        | 1 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 49             | 58 | 28    | 33 | 6        | 7 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 42             | 49 | 35    | 41 | 4        | 5 | 0                 | 0 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 44             | 52 | 30    | 35 | 2        | 2 | 2                 | 2 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 55             | 65 | 26    | 31 | 0        | 0 | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 64             | 75 | 15    | 18 | 4        | 5 | 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](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.**



14 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St George's CE Primary School, Sheerness ME12 3QU**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We were very interested in what you had to say. Your school ensures that you stay safe and the adults all care about your health and welfare. We were very pleased to find that you knew very well what keeps you fit and healthy. This is highly commendable; well done! We thought you were well behaved and courteous.

Your school does some things well but it needs to make some improvements too. We decided that it is satisfactory overall. The youngest children in your school get a good start to their education and make good progress. Your headteacher, alongside his senior team and the teachers, does a satisfactory job. So that your school can make steps to becoming a good school, we have asked that they work on these things:

- We would like the school to make sure that you make more progress, particularly in reading. We have also asked your headteacher to ensure that he checks that teachers are helping you to make as much progress as you can. We have also asked that satisfactory teachers are helped to become good. Teachers will explain to the teaching assistants what they would like them to do to help you. We have also asked that teaching assistants keep a closer eye on you in the classroom to ensure they help without you putting up your hand.
- We have asked the governors to take part in some training so that they can support the work of the headteacher.
- Finally we are concerned, and you can help with this one, about the amount of school some of you miss. If you are ill, you and your parents cannot help it, but there are other times when some of you could have gone to school but your parents took you away on long holidays. The school is working hard with increasing success to make sure everyone attends but missing school stops you from learning, so perhaps some of you can persuade your parents to see that you miss as little time as possible.

We wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Lead inspector

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