

# St George's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	115149
<b>Local authority</b>	Southend-on-Sea
<b>Inspection number</b>	379022
<b>Inspection dates</b>	20–21 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Michelle Winter HMI

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>	206
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Frank McEvoy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Annabelle Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 December 2008
<b>School address</b>	Eagle Way Shoeburyness Southend-on-Sea SS3 9RN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01702 293522
<b>Fax number</b>	01702 291126
<b>Email address</b>	office@st-georges.southend.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	20–21 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	379022



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Michelle Winter

Her Majesty's Inspector

Peter Lacey-Hastings

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Teaching and learning were seen in 14 lessons and seven teachers were observed including six joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors listened to pupils from Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 read. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, assessments and monitoring evidence. Inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work books. They considered responses to questionnaires returned by 111 parents and carers and those from pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

This is an average sized one-form entry primary school in the Catholic diocese of Brentwood. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2012. Most pupils are of White British heritage and few are new to speaking English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in one Reception class. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Pupils enjoy school and attendance is high. Parents and carers are highly positive about the school’s welcoming, supportive and friendly environment. The school is not yet good because satisfactory teaching is not securing consistently good progress in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of effective provision. Attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 has been broadly average for the past three years in English and mathematics. Pupils do not make consistently good progress in Key Stage 1 and 2 lessons because of inconsistencies in teaching.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. In Key Stage 1 and 2 most teaching is satisfactory. Some lessons do not successfully promote pupils’ full involvement or precisely show them how to meet their learning targets. Pupils do not receive enough helpful feedback on how to improve their work, particularly in mathematics. Those pupils who receive additional small group support in literacy and numeracy make good progress.
- Relationships are highly positive and there is a strong caring ethos based on mutual respect. Pupils support each other to behave well in a safe environment where spiritual, moral and social development is promoted strongly.
- The newly appointed headteacher has quickly communicated high expectations of pupils’ progress to the whole school community. The governing body is effective. Systems are in place to improve the effectiveness of teachers as leaders; however this work is an early stage and has not yet had a significant impact. The monitoring of teaching and learning has become regular; however it does not precisely evaluate the impact of teaching on the progress pupils make.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Improve teaching to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress in lessons by:
  - using assessment information to ensure that tasks are appropriately matched to pupils' needs and abilities
  - ensuring that pupils are actively involved throughout lessons and have greater opportunities to contribute their thoughts and ideas
  - providing pupils with clear guidance about what they are doing well and what they need to improve during lessons and in teachers' marking
  - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching and learning precisely evaluates the impact of teaching on the progress pupils make in lessons.
  
- Increase the school's capacity to improve by continuing to develop the effectiveness of middle and subject leaders in improving areas of the school's provision.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Most parents and carers say they are happy with the progress their children make although a small minority expressed concern that their children were not sufficiently challenged. The inspection team found that some pupils make good progress, particularly those who benefit from additional small group support including some pupils with special educational needs. However, for most pupils progress in lessons is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Pupils enter the school with skills typical for their age. In the Early Years Foundation Stage standards are improving and a higher proportion of pupils acquire the skills expected for their age. Children's independent learning skills are well promoted in the Reception class through an appropriate balance between activities which children choose for themselves and those that adults lead. The regular teaching of the sounds letters make (phonics) contributes effectively to pupils' developing reading skills. As a result, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading has improved to well above average. Younger pupils are able to apply their previous learning to break down unknown words into the sounds they know so they can read them successfully. Attainment in reading at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2011 remained broadly average but assessment data indicate it is improving. Older pupils enjoy reading and can talk knowledgeably about their favourite authors and books. They say they would like a wider range of books to choose from in the school library.

Pupils develop their skills in mathematics in both Key Stages 1 and 2 satisfactorily;

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progress is not good because teaching is not precisely meeting learners' needs; some pupils cannot complete tasks successfully because they have not developed the necessary skills well enough. On occasion, other activities for the more-able pupils do not extend them and pupils are repeating previous learning. In one lesson, for example, pupils were completing tasks planned to increase their knowledge of times tables; however, some pupils' existing skills extended beyond the aims of the lesson.

Writing skills are developing satisfactorily in Key Stages 1 and 2. Progress is not more rapid because some teaching does not meet the precise needs of pupils. There is too little focus on what needs to improve and too little guidance on how to improve specific writing skills. In one lesson, for example, pupils were asked to use more adventurous vocabulary in their writing but there was little guidance on how to achieve this or what the teacher's expectations were.

Some pupils identified as falling behind receive additional effective support to develop reading, writing and mathematical skills. In recent years boys' achievement was lower than girls in English and mathematics. However inspection evidence suggests that this is no longer the case for pupils currently at the school.

### **Quality of teaching**

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel their children are taught well. The inspection found that teaching is satisfactory and that there are some good aspects to teachers' practice. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children apply the knowledge and skills taught in group activities to their independent play, both indoors and in the outside environment. Activities are well planned to meet children's needs and interests and informed through close observations of children at play. Attractive 'learning journey' books record their achievements. Parents and carers contribute to these by recording activities and milestones at home.

There is a strong culture of respect and consistently positive relationships between teachers and pupils across the school therefore pupils are motivated to learn. Pupils cooperate with each other well when they work in pairs or small groups. Much of the teaching is taught within a themed topic so that pupils can see links in their learning. Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the curriculum, their management of classes, and through regular opportunities for prayer and reflection. Additional adults working with small groups and individuals during lessons make a positive contribution to learning.

Teachers plan for the various levels of attainment in the class with different tasks for different groups of pupils. However, teachers do not consistently check pupils' understanding to re-shape lessons to meet their emerging needs or to build rapidly on established skills. In addition sometimes pupils are listening for too long and are not afforded enough opportunities to contribute to lessons or engage in independent activities, therefore the pace of learning slows.

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Pupils' work is usually marked and some useful feedback is given, particularly in response to extended writing. Pupils themselves say they appreciate teachers' helpful comments in some of their writing and would like more of this in other lessons. Almost all of the marking in mathematics books, however, lacks guidance on what has been done well, what can improve or what the next steps in learning are. Most marking in these books is through a tick and little else.

**Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently well managed. Clear expectations are established in the Early Years Foundation Stage and continue through the school. The majority of parents and carers agree that behaviour is good. Pupils are respectful and treat each other well. They are keen to learn and apply themselves enthusiastically to the tasks they are given. Pupils are confident and happy to discuss their work. Their attendance is high and most are punctual. Pupils enjoy attending the popular breakfast club and it has proved effective in improving punctuality for the small minority of pupils who had records of persistent lateness. Pupils feel safe and are confident that behaviour is generally good. They have a good understanding of unsafe situations and strategies to keep themselves safe including when using the internet. Pupils contribute to their own safety by walking calmly around the school and behaving well in the playground. Almost all believe that any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with appropriately. Scrutiny of school records confirms that any form of bullying is rare. Pupils appreciate the opportunity to talk through their concerns with the headteacher by putting their names in the 'worry box'. There have been no recent exclusions. Incidents of poor behaviour are uncommon and dealt with appropriately, including through discussion with parents and carers.

**Leadership and management**

The recently appointed headteacher has secured the confidence of pupils, staff, parents and carers. In their responses to the Ofsted questionnaire parents and carers were highly positive about the information they receive and the availability of the headteacher and staff to discuss their needs or concerns. The school's engagement with parents and carers is highly positive. Staff responses to the Ofsted questionnaire indicate that morale in the school is high.

Senior leaders including members of the governing body are ambitious for the school. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and are committed to improving achievement. Members of the governing body have a range of skills and are deployed to good effect. The safeguarding governor ensures that policies and procedures to protect pupils are secure and visits the school to carry out random checks. Improvement plans include appropriate priorities to tackle weaknesses. They are detailed and the governing body reviews their progress. Members of the governing body are aware of the need to set more measurable success criteria for pupils' attainment. Decisions to allocate resources are evaluated through their impact on improving achievement.

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The curriculum is broad, balanced and enriched through a range of extra-curricular activities including drama and music. Themed days and visitors to the school further add to pupils' enjoyment. The school's faith commitment promotes spiritual, social and moral development well through lessons, assemblies and well-established links to the local parish church. Pupil's awareness of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom and beyond is less well-developed. They have only a broad understanding of other world religions. The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination adequately.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. The special educational needs leader monitors the progress of pupils carefully and works in an effective partnership with parents and carers to ensure that pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress. The headteacher has reviewed the staffing structure and set clear objectives for middle and subject leaders to achieve in raising standards. Coaching and professional development training are provided to improve the effectiveness of these leaders, but because arrangements are new the impact is yet to be seen. The headteacher regularly observes lessons and provides helpful feedback to teachers but this has yet to make an impact on improving teaching overall. Records show that there has been a lack of clarity in some evaluations of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. However evidence from joint observations conducted during the inspection indicates that the headteacher is well placed to evaluate the quality of teaching accurately. High expectations and an enthusiasm to improve matters are clearly communicated to all members of the school community.



## 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



22 March 2012

Dear Pupils,

**Inspection of St George's Catholic Primary School, Southend-on-Sea, SS3 9RN**

Thank you for making us so welcome when I visited your school recently with my colleague. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you in lessons, meetings and on the playground. We also read your views about the school in the questionnaires some of you completed and heard some of you read.

You told us that you enjoy your lessons and think that the school takes good care of you and keeps you safe. I agree with your views. We were very pleased to see how well you behave in lessons, assemblies, on the playground and around the school.

Overall, you are making satisfactory progress. Leadership and teaching at the school are satisfactory. Behaviour and safety are good.

I have asked the adults that lead and manage your school to improve it further by:

- making sure that the activities you do in lessons match your needs
- giving you more opportunities to be fully involved in all parts of your lessons so that you are not listening for too long
- making sure that when teachers mark your work they always tell you how well you are doing and what you need to improve
- making sure when teachers are observed by school leaders the focus is on how well the teaching helps you learn
- making sure that teachers who are responsible for subjects or aspects of the school's work are helped to do their jobs well.

I am sure you will play your part by continuing to work hard and doing your very best.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Winter  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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