

St George's Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113803
Local Authority	Dorset
Inspection number	357426
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	83
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Greenleaves
Headteacher	Anita Brown
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2007
School address	High Street Swanage BH19 3HB
Telephone number	01929422973
Fax number	01929427936
Email address	office@stgeorgeslangton.dorset.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and observed five teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. The inspectors talked to pupils in lessons and at break times. They observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including development planning, monitoring information and evidence of safeguarding procedures, and pupils' books. They analysed 47 responses to the parental questionnaire and took account of the views expressed by parents and carers during informal meetings and conversations.

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

- The progress and learning of different groups of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How well work challenges different groups of pupils, including additional support and intervention for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How effectively targets are used in lessons to help pupils assess their own work and understand what they need to do to improve.
- The quality of opportunities for children to explore and initiate their own learning, including outside learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller-than-average size first school serving the local village and rural community. There are five separate classes in the mornings and mixed-age classes in the afternoons. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a separate outdoor learning area. The school has recently been subject to a reorganisation consultation which has resulted in a decision to extend the age range from 411 in 2012. A privately run pre-school shares some of the school's facilities; it was not part of this inspection.

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

St George's Church of England First is a good school where pupils achieve well. Attainment is above average and pupils make good progress from their different starting points, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. In Reception, children choose different activities confidently and most reach the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and say they enjoy the many different activities they do. They are attentive in lessons and work together confidently, for example when solving problems in mathematics. In the outside areas and around the school, pupils get on noticeably well together. Pupils comment that they feel safe. They play sensibly at break times with skipping ropes and hoops or on the fixed-play equipment. Pupils make a good contribution to school life, by taking on additional responsibilities and planning activities to raise money. They are very proud of their school and confident that adults will support them if any issue arises. Pupils articulate their views and give their opinions with considerable confidence both in discussion with adults or in front of the whole school during assemblies. Pupils have a real sense of being treated fairly. The school has a strong Christian ethos and is an exceptionally close-knit and friendly community. However, pupils' understanding of people from different cultures and backgrounds within the United Kingdom is underdeveloped.

Planning for different levels of ability is good. Those who need additional help are supported skilfully by adults and, as a result, they learn well alongside other pupils. While learning often moves on at a brisk pace, there are a few occasions when it slows, for example when pupils are held together as a whole group for too long and ideas do not move on quickly enough. Pupils say they are treated with respect at all times and that their teachers are firm yet kind. Pupils are keen to answer questions and often give lengthy responses to explain their understanding. Good use of individual targets in lessons, particularly in writing, provides pupils with a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. The curriculum offers some memorable experiences including, for example, the 'stony bones' project which gives them real insight into the uniqueness of the local area. However, information and communication technology (ICT) is not used on a regular enough basis to support learning in different subjects.

The headteacher, with active support from the governing body, has maintained a strong focus on pupils' learning through the uncertainty arising from the consultation on reorganisation. Coordinators have led successful initiatives in both mathematics and English based on a clear evaluation of strengths and weaknesses. Leaders have successfully addressed the issues identified in the previous inspection report to improve the use of targets in lessons and to develop outside learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This, together with a continuous drive for improvement, demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustained development.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress in lessons and make learning more individual by:
 - ensuring that ideas in lessons are moved on at a brisk pace
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use ICT across subjects to support their learning.
- Develop pupils' understanding of others from different cultures and backgrounds within the United Kingdom. Develop pupils' understanding of others from different cultures and backgrounds within the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children typically start school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are in line with those expected for their ages. By the time they reach Year 4, attainment in writing and mathematics is above average. In reading, attainment is high. In Year 3, for example, pupils read texts with considerable confidence and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, often because of the intervention of teaching assistants who provide support through probing questioning. Pupils apply their skills with assurance. In Year 2, for example, they tackled a range of different mathematics problems and showed delight in solving them. Pupils write well for a range of purposes in different subjects. In Year 4, pupils developed many ideas and used adventurous vocabulary in a piece of writing to persuade people to visit 'their' holiday destination. The strength in writing has secure foundations initiated in the lower part of the school. In Year 1, most pupils write in full sentences, and plan the beginning, middle and ends of stories effectively.

Around the school, the pupils are very well mannered and polite. Attitudes to learning are good and sometimes excellent. Pupils' good understanding about how to keep themselves safe includes awareness of the possible dangers of using the internet. They value the range of additional sporting activities and enthusiastically attend these. They comment that they would like more opportunities to use computers in their lessons. They have a good understanding of the sorts of healthy food that they should eat such as vegetables and fruit. Pupils lead exercise routines at the start of the day. The 'walking bus' promotes good road safety awareness through wearing 'hi vis' vests. Pupils' attendance is average and there is currently no pupil who is persistently absent. ♦ In assemblies, they respond well to opportunities to reflect, including collective worship.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

There is a purposeful working atmosphere in all classes. Teachers frequently use questioning well to promote thinking and pupils respond enthusiastically when asked to discuss their ideas with each other. Group work is often successful because pupils enjoy working with each other. However, there are a few occasions when pupils are kept together as a single group for too long, and this slows learning for some groups of pupils, including those who need additional help. Teachers give frequent reminders in lessons to pupils to refer to targets and, as a result, most self-correct and improve their work. The curriculum provides some memorable experiences, including fossil hunting, stone carving and working with local artists. The topic on Celts and Romans was made more exciting and relevant through visiting a local technology centre to make bricks and fences. While ICT skills are built on regularly, opportunities are missed to use computers to help with writing and support learning in other subjects. There are strengths in music. Pupils play violins in assembly, recorders at lunchtimes and enjoy singing. Reading is promoted well through the library which has texts to engage the interests of boys and girls.

Pupils and their parents and carers are known individually. The school has good procedures to follow up on any absence and regular attendance is celebrated. The headteacher and other staff welcome the pupils and their parents and carers into school at the start of the day. There are good links with the on-site pre-school and frequent contact with the middle school to ensure that the pupils are confident about moving on. Leaders

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utilise additional services to ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are met.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has communicated with great clarity her vision for the school's future to staff. She has the support of all staff including other leaders. There have been fruitful developments in English through the use of a story-making project and in mathematics, focused on applying knowledge and understanding. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and enables the headteacher to support and challenge individual staff, and ensure that the provision is adapted for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Any gaps in performance between different groups are being closed and provision to secure equal opportunities and tackle discrimination for all pupils is good. The governing body is well organised and a visible presence in the school. It has been influential in steering the school through a period of uncertainty, has promoted good links with parents and carers and regularly seeks their views. It is improving its role by beginning to monitor the impact of policies, including that for community cohesion and how well different groups of pupils are achieving. Leaders recognise that, while pupils get on with each other noticeably well, the school has not yet done enough to deepen pupils' understanding of those from different cultures and backgrounds within the United Kingdom. This is rightly identified as an important area for development in planning. Safeguarding duties are met well. Staff have been well trained in child protection and all the required checks are made. There are also strengths in promoting safety awareness with pupils, including use of the internet.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

While children come into school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are in line with those expected for their ages, aspects of their personal development are stronger and reading and writing are the weaker areas. They make good progress from their different starting points. Although limitations remain due to the buildings, leaders have made significant improvements in outside learning since the time of the previous inspection. The children enjoy playing in the sand, riding on trikes, making models and selling goods in the 'garden centre'. They talk about the different things they have for sale and are beginning to count money. Children write their names to identify which activities they would like to do and interact confidently with adults and each other. They feel safe and secure and know about the importance of washing hands. Letters and their sounds are being taught well in more formal activities. Children's development is tracked through 'learning journeys' and in records, including information from pre-school. These provide a clear picture of their attainment and progress across the areas of learning. Adults work well together to promote children's speaking and listening.

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	2

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Stage	
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Views of parents and carers

There was an above average response rate from parents and carers to the inspection questionnaire. Responses indicate a strong level of satisfaction with what the school provides. Parents and carers think their children are kept very safe and inspectors agree. Most comments made in the questionnaires are very complimentary about the school. These include the 'kindly and family-like nature of the school' as well as the friendly and approachable staff. There are a few comments that their children's progress slowed and reached 'a bit of a plateau' at times. During this inspection, inspectors found that the great majority of pupils make good progress and reach above average attainment.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St George's Church of England First 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 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 83 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	72	11	23	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	81	9	19	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	55	19	40	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	62	13	28	4	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	68	13	28	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	66	13	28	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	68	14	30	1	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)	26	55	15	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	60	13	28	3	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	60	14	30	4	9	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	64	13	28	2	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	72	9	19	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	72	9	19	3	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

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



9 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's Church of England First School, Langton Matravers, BH19 3HB

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for talking to us so confidently about your work. You were very polite and friendly. You go to a good school, and we agree with you that the teaching is good and you are well cared for. In the survey, nearly all of you told us that you feel safe. Here are some of the things we particularly liked about your school.

- You are doing well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You get on well together and there is a distinctive family atmosphere.
- Those of you who need additional help are supported by adults and this enables you to learn as well as other pupils.
- You behave well and concentrate in lessons.
- You willingly take on responsibility and have a good understanding of how to stay safe.
- Your teachers provide you with a lot of different, interesting activities to help you to learn. ♦

To help you make even faster progress, I have asked your headteacher to make sure that your learning is moved on briskly in all of your lessons and you have more opportunities to use computers. I have also asked the staff to give you more opportunities to work with others from different backgrounds and cultures, for example in different schools.

You can help your teachers by always coming to school unless you are unwell. ♦

Yours sincerely

Peter Clifton

Lead inspector

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