

St George's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108499
Local Authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	356374
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Carol Gater

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	76
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Archibald
Headteacher	Mrs Jennifer Gill
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Bell's Close Newcastle-upon-Tyne Tyne and Wear NE15 6XX
Telephone number	0191 267 5677
Fax number	0191 267 5677
Email address	jennifer.gill@stgeorges.newcastle.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2011
Inspection number	356374

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited eight lessons and observed five teachers. Discussions were held with staff, parents and carers, pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors also looked at a range of documentation that included safeguarding policies, assessment data, monitoring records and pupils' work. They analysed 23 questionnaires from parents and carers as well as those from staff and pupils.

- The impact of the school's actions to raise attainment in writing, particularly for boys.
- The quality of teaching and learning and how effectively teachers plan activities that challenge all groups of pupils.
- The way in which leaders use monitoring systems to improve teaching and learning.

Information about the school

St. George's is a smaller than average Roman Catholic primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is now below that found nationally. The school has achieved Healthy School status and the Green Flag award.

In the absence of staff with key responsibilities, a local headteacher is supporting the school in aspects of leadership and management.

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 Roman Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The new headteacher's commitment to creating a welcoming, inclusive environment where only the best is good enough for pupils is shared by the governing body. Good care and support are at the heart of the school. Parents and carers highly value the school's 'family' atmosphere and 'caring ethos'. They appreciate that all staff are very approachable, know their children well and keep them safe. They comment on the positive impact the headteacher has made in a relatively short time.

Staffing instability in the past has slowed the rate of progress and attainment. The headteacher has redeployed teachers and put rigorous systems in place to improve outcomes for all pupils. Recent actions taken to improve writing have accelerated the rate of progress, particularly for boys. Year 6 pupils are now on track to reach national standards in English and mathematics. Progress is satisfactory.

Through the curriculum, pupils have a good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lifestyles. They have a good awareness of how to work together for the good of the school and community and the comment of one pupil, 'We are a small school but want to make a big difference', echoes the views of many. They are keen to take on roles of responsibility. Year 6 pupils mentor children in Reception class and organise the weekly 'Wall of Fame' assembly to celebrate pupils' achievements.

Pupils enjoy school and say that teachers make learning 'fun'. Teachers' clear instructions and carefully organised activities mean that pupils settle quickly to their work. However, these activities are not always sufficiently matched to challenge all abilities and, as a result, progress remains satisfactory rather than good. Where teachers' expectations are high, the quality and quantity of pupils' work are good. This is not currently consistent across all classes. The school's marking policy has been revised so that feedback to pupils will help them to be aware of their targets to improve. This is in the early stages of implementation and has not yet had time to affect the rates of progress. Well-trained teaching assistants skilfully deliver a range of programmes which ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as their peers. There are some examples of those who make good and outstanding progress.

Evaluation by the school and governors is accurate. The headteacher has valued the good support of the local authority in improving provision and attendance, which is now in line with the national average. In the absence of staff with key leadership roles, the headteacher is working in partnership with an experienced headteacher from a local school to further drive school improvement. Procedures are in place to ensure that all teachers are accountable for pupils making good progress. As such, the school has satisfactory capacity for improvements to be sustained.

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

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?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics by using the monitoring systems that are in place to ensure that teachers are accountable for pupils making good progress.
- Improve the overall quality of teaching to at least good by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have high expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' work
 - assessment information is used to plan activities matched to pupils' needs, so that all are challenged
 - marking provides specific points for improvement and links with pupils' targets
 - pupils know their targets and how to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Good relationships and good behaviour contribute to pupils' positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to do well and work cooperatively in a range of contexts.

Children enter school with skills that vary but that are largely typical for their age. Throughout school they make satisfactory progress, leaving at the end of Year 6 with attainment that is broadly in line with the national average. All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress, but targeted programmes have accelerated progress for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Recent initiatives have reversed the downward trend in writing. Work in books and current assessment information show that progress is accelerating, particularly for boys. Monitoring procedures are in place to evaluate the rate of pupils' progress in English and mathematics in all year groups.

Pupils at St George's show care and respect for each other. They say they feel that the school keeps them safe and are confident that adults in the school will sort out any problems they have. They have a good understanding of right and wrong, and are proud to be ambassadors for their school. Pupils enjoy keeping fit and recently took part in a 'Marathon Challenge', completing 26 physical activity sessions over a six week period. They are keen to take on roles of responsibility; such as buddies, monitors and school councillors. The school council is proactive in collecting suggestions to improve the school and the local environment. It was instrumental in achieving the Green Flag award for the school. Pupils support a range of local and international charities and have a sensitive understanding of different faiths and cultures. They enjoy the opportunities provided to develop their enterprise skills; such as designing merchandise for the Olympic Games. These experiences, together with their sound acquisition of basic skills and average attendance, mean that pupils are adequately prepared for their next steps in learning.

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	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Pupils enjoy their lessons and engage particularly well when practical activities are planned. For example, in a mathematics lesson, older pupils worked outdoors, measuring the distances that individuals jumped, in order to collate data for a frequency graph. Because of the school's focus on pupils' progress, teachers are now regularly using assessment information to plan different activities for different groups. However, in some cases these do not provide sufficient challenge for all individuals. Teachers use praise well, orally and in their marking. They are at the early stages of ensuring that they provide specific comments to inform pupils of how they can improve their work.

The curriculum is enriched through sports partnerships, extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. These have a positive impact on pupils' good personal development. Work with a local artist has engaged pupils, parents and carers, and parishioners in designing and making a ceramic tile display for the school. A Spanish week allowed pupils and parents to sample a different culture and its heritage. The headteacher is ensuring that the curriculum addresses the school's priorities. Support programmes, tailored for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are at risk of underachieving, are beginning to impact on attainment and progress. Actions are in place to sustain these successes and target other groups to raise attainment.

Care, guidance and support are good. The Catholic ethos of love, care and forgiveness underpins the school's work. All staff know pupils well and are quick to identify any

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

barriers to learning. The headteacher makes it a priority to liaise with parents and carers and external agencies so that appropriate support is quickly made available. Transition between classes is good and transfer arrangements to secondary school are strong, so that pupils are confident in moving to the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is passionate in her drive for school improvement. In a short time she has established comprehensive systems that track pupils' progress. Regular meetings with teachers are held to evaluate rates of progress. Currently, in partnership with an experienced headteacher, there has been an increased focus on professional development for all staff, including support for subject leadership. Involvement with a cluster of schools has led to sharing good practice in assessment.

The governing body is very supportive of the headteacher and is involved in the evaluation of the school's strengths and areas to develop. It ensures that all safeguarding procedures are well met.

Effective communication with parents and carers and other agencies make a strong contribution to the curriculum and care that pupils, particularly those who are most vulnerable, receive. The school is a very cohesive family community and there are strong links with the parish and local community. The school evaluates this and its links with other cultures, both national and international. Equal opportunities are promoted so that all pupils can access what the school has to offer and any suggestion of discrimination is firmly addressed. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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 leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Parents confidently leave their children in the care of Reception class staff. One parent comments that his son likes it so much that 'he wants to come to school on a weekend'. Children quickly settle into established routines, such as displaying their photographs to register their attendance. Access to snacks of fruit and vegetables helps them to have a good understanding of keeping healthy. Children are proud of their achievements; such as using digital cameras, conducting science investigations and writing sentences.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has worked hard with an early years' specialist to improve provision. There is now more of a balance between adult-led activities and those which children can choose for themselves, both inside and outdoors. Much has been done to enhance the outdoor learning environment and the attractive garden boxes are a result of the children's ideas. The teaching assistant ably supports the teacher, using questions well to extend children's thinking and their vocabulary.

Observational assessments are being used to inform planning but practice is not yet fully embedded, so activities do not always provide appropriate challenge. Overall, children make expected progress throughout Reception to start Year 1 with skills that are average for their age. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is beginning to gain confidence in analysing data to identify future actions.

Welfare requirements are fully met and ensure that children are safe and secure. Communication with parents and carers is good and there are opportunities planned for them to contribute to their children's learning journals.

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 the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents and carers are positive in their views about all aspects of the school's work. They are overwhelmingly in agreement that their children enjoy school and that the school helps their children to lead a healthy lifestyle. A very large majority feel that the school keeps their children safe. Inspectors agree with these positive views. A small minority feel that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors saw no evidence to support this. During the inspection pupils' behaviour was good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St George's RC 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 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 76 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	57	10	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	57	9	39	1	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	12	52	10	43	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	39	12	52	2	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	8	35	12	52	2	9	1	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	43	12	52	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	48	12	52	0	0	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)	10	43	10	43	3	13	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	35	10	43	5	22	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	39	6	26	7	30	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	35	13	57	2	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	48	10	43	2	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	10	43	9	39	3	13	1	4

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.



19 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's RC Primary School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE15 6XX

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views. Please thank your parents and carers for the questionnaires they returned.

St George's provides you with a satisfactory education and offers good care and support for all its pupils.

I agree with you that the school does have a 'family' atmosphere and it is obvious that you get on well with each other. I am impressed with how much you know about keeping healthy and staying safe. Many of you take advantage of after-school activities such as gymnastics, football and cookery. Congratulations to all who took part in the 'Marathon Challenge'. You act very responsibly, willingly taking on the roles of buddies, monitors and school councillors. I know that you play a very active role in the community and are keen to protect your environment. Well done to the school council and all who helped to achieve the Green Flag award for the school. By raising money for a range of local and international charities, you show how much you care for those who are less fortunate than yourselves.

You enjoy coming to school and say that your teachers make lessons fun. I have asked your headteacher and teachers to help you to reach higher standards in English and mathematics. I have asked them to make sure you all make good progress by planning activities that challenge you and by telling you exactly what you need to do to improve your work.

You can help by continuing to work hard on your targets in all your lessons.

I wish you every success for the future and hope that you enjoy your Prom!

Yours sincerely

Carol Gater

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.