

St George's CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112289
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	363789
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Naomi Taylor

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Noreen Thompson
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Kent
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited fourteen lessons and observed the work of nine teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress and the school's monitoring, self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The 98 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were also analysed by the inspectors.

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

- Is the curriculum planned and delivered to maximise opportunities for pupils to develop numeracy and literacy skills?
- What impact does the use of assessment for learning in lessons have on pupils' progress?
- What are the strategies used to engage with parents and carers in order to improve attendance?
- What understanding do pupils have of the multi-cultural society in Britain and the lives of others in different parts of the world?

Information about the school

This is an average size primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average, as is those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The school holds many awards including Healthy School status, the Activemark, Artsmark (silver) and Eco School (bronze). The local authority has awarded the school an Inclusion Chartermark (Gold) and uses the school as a hub for Assessment for Learning. The school runs a reading/ breakfast club. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual time is higher than average.

The school is currently housed in temporary accommodation in a former secondary school whilst new building work and refurbishment of the school is taking place.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. From starting points that are generally well below those expected for their age all groups of pupils make good progress with the result that attainment is average by the time they leave. Leadership and management are good. Despite being in temporary accommodation, the staff work diligently to create an environment which stimulates learning. The outstanding care, guidance and support afforded to all pupils ensure they feel part of a family community where they are respected and valued.

The quality of pupils' contributions to the school and wider community is outstanding. Older pupils take on many responsibilities and are proactive in their support for others through their charity work. Pupils' behaviour is good and they are supportive and considerate towards each other and to the adults around them. The vast majority of pupils are involved in extra-curricular activities, which make a major contribution to pupils' personal and social development and their enjoyment of school. Numeracy and literacy are well taught in English and mathematics lessons. Occasionally, opportunities to apply basic skills across the curriculum are not always fully developed. The headteacher has been instrumental in developing outstanding partnerships with other schools, which bring increased opportunities for pupils to engage with others outside of their immediate community. Excellent safeguarding procedures result in extensive work with external agencies to support those pupils and their families who may be at risk. This has resulted in the local authority using the school as a leader of high quality practice. All staff work tirelessly to ensure that every single child has equal opportunity for personal and academic development. Pupils' attendance is average overall. Although the majority of pupils go to school regularly there are a few pupils who are disadvantaged because they do not attend as regularly as they should.

Teaching is predominantly good or better. Most lessons are well paced and teachers' knowledgeable and clear explanations extend pupils' understanding. There is thorough tracking and monitoring of pupils' learning. This assessment information is used well to precisely plan lessons and interventions so that all pupils are suitably challenged.

Leaders and managers have addressed the weaknesses identified by the last inspection. They monitor and evaluate the schools' work rigorously and are very clear about what is needed to develop the school's work further. This demonstrates the schools good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain the current good progress and raise attainment by continuing to increase the opportunities for pupils to apply their key skills across the curriculum.

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- Improve attendance by targeting groups of pupils whose attendance is below the national average and further impressing on all parents and carers the importance of regular attendance to enable more pupils to benefit from uninterrupted learning and maximise their potential.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their work, make good progress and achieve well. Some pupils attend the reading/breakfast club before school, which helps their day get off to a good start. Pupils particularly enjoy project work and were keen to show inspectors their work on the Ancient Egyptians. In a Year 3 design technology class pupils were very excited at creating a 'moving monster' and readily explained the pneumatic system being used. In nearly all lessons, pupils were making good progress.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as their peers and there are examples of individuals making outstanding progress. They receive constructive individual and small group support from specialist teachers and teaching assistants and this gives them the confidence and skills to succeed. Almost half of the current Year 6 class joined the school during Key Stage 2, which has increased the need for interventions in mathematics and English. Results in tests and assessments have improved since the last inspection. Pupils are now reaching standards in line with national expectations in both English and mathematics by the time they leave school and the percentage of pupils reaching a higher than average level is increasing. Throughout the school, pupils develop good information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

The vast majority of pupils attend after-school clubs and this helps their personal development, health and well-being. The 'Glee Club' is an example of activities instigated by pupils and demonstrates that their voice is heard and acted upon by staff. 'Let's get cooking' enables parents and carers, their children and the staff to learn together about the importance of healthy lifestyles. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They say their lessons are fun. They treat each other, staff and visitors with respect. Pupils say they feel safe in the temporary premises and the very few cases of bullying are acted upon immediately and effectively by staff. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and willingly take on responsibilities, for example, as members of the school council. The older children take care of the younger ones in their role as junior wardens and by playing with the Early Years Foundation Stage children during breaks. Pupils develop good teamwork skills. The school recognises the importance of uninterrupted learning and has introduced strategies such as the reading/breakfast club to improve attendance. School staff have started visiting families at home to reinforce the importance of attending school regularly. There is a strong focus on developing the social opportunities within the school and the local community. Multi-cultural experiences have increased, with examples of pupils visiting a Buddhist community and people of other faiths visiting the school.

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	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	1
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?

The school's monitoring of lessons and the lessons observed during the inspection show that teaching is mainly good or better. Teachers plan their lessons well and make good use of varied resources to ensure that all pupils make good progress and enjoy their learning. In most lessons, work proceeds at a brisk pace and is well matched to pupils' needs. The more-able pupils are confident to work independently at times and to find things out for themselves. The monitoring of individual learning, carried out by teachers and teaching assistants, is thorough and informs lesson planning. A tracking system is used well to plan interventions for individuals or small groups of learners to boost their progress. The 'Girls in Maths' project has had an impact on the positive attitude girls now have towards mathematics and has helped in raising their attainment. There is regular marking of work to explain to pupils how they are progressing and what they need to do to improve their work. There is a whole-school focus on developing reading and writing and raising the number of learners achieving the higher levels.

The curriculum is enriched by many opportunities, including games club, cheerleading, expressive dance, art, cooking and much more, which is a reflection of the various awards that the school holds. Pupils have access to storytellers, artists, architects and experience a range of trips, including residentials. These opportunities inspire their learning and contribute greatly to their personal and social development. Year 1 pupils were enthused by their visit to the Dock Museum and used this experience to enhance their literacy skills.

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There are some good examples of pupils being encouraged to develop and practice communication and other key skills in subjects other than mathematics and English, but occasionally opportunities are not fully developed.

Parents and carers agree overwhelmingly that their children are extremely well cared for in school. Extremely well-targeted support helps all pupils to make the best of their opportunities. There is excellent provision for all aspects of pastoral care and pupils, parents and carers know that all staff want the very best for each and every child.

The school is effective in identifying and meeting the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. The work of the teachers and teaching assistants is very effective in ensuring that all groups progress well. Transition arrangements are extremely well planned for those starting and leaving school at any given point. This helps the pupils to settle quickly and make new friends with their peers and adults alike.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

There is good leadership and management at all levels. Staff share a strong commitment to improvement and morale is high. The headteacher's very clear vision of the school being at the heart of the community and providing every single child with the opportunity to improve their personal and professional life chances is shared by all staff. The governing body knows the school well and provides valuable support and challenge. Training needs have been identified for those who are relatively new to their roles. The school takes every opportunity to work in partnership to enhance the professional development opportunities for staff to improve the schools provision. Highly effective risk assessment and child protection procedures are in place and are evident in the daily practice of the school, which makes pupils constantly aware of the importance of safety issues. Excellent relationships with external agencies result in maximum support for those pupils and their families who may be vulnerable. Consequently, every child is given an equal opportunity to succeed no matter what their personal circumstances or academic starting points are and at whatever stage they join the school. The school promotes community cohesion very well within the local community. It is in the early stages of developing this work further afield within Britain and overseas to secure pupils' understanding of communities and cultures which are different to their own.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in personal development, language and numeracy. They settle quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes and soon feel happy and secure because of effective induction arrangements and supportive links with parents and carers, including home visits. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively to ensure that children make good progress in their personal development and are equipped with the skills they need to enable them to learn. Their progress in communication, language, literacy and number is helped by effective deployment of teaching assistants using speech therapy programmes. Most children enjoy being at school, play happily with their friends and form good relationships with adults. Activities are fun, with children particularly enjoying learning about numbers through building a street and then pretending to be the postman delivering to the correct house by recognising the numbers on the parcels and letters and matching them to the house number. However, there was a missed opportunity to develop communication skills by encouraging the children to talk to each other as if they were walking down their street.

Children's progress is assessed carefully and their individual needs are met well. They are well taught and have a good range of learning opportunities in the classroom. The outdoor provision is limited due to the temporary accommodation but the staff have done all they can to ensure this space provides opportunities for outdoor learning for the children and that it is secure. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Staff work together to plan children's learning very effectively. All safety and welfare requirements are exceptionally well met.

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	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 Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers are very pleased with the education that the school provides. They particularly value the care and support their children are given. Some comment on the fact that their children are at their happiest when at school during term time. The very few concerns recorded related to individual issues that were followed up with the headteacher. There was no pattern of dissatisfaction.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St George's CofE 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 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 213 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	64	33	34	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	68	69	28	29	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	68	69	25	26	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	61	32	33	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	66	67	29	30	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	63	32	33	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	62	35	36	1	1	1	1
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)	55	56	36	37	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	60	61	32	33	6	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	56	57	36	37	3	3	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	50	46	47	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	60	61	36	37	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	69	70	26	27	2	2	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.



19 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St George's CofE School, Barrow-in-Furness, LA14 2DX

Thank you so much for making us welcome when we came to inspect your school last week. A particular 'thank you' to those who took time to talk with us about all the things that you do and that you enjoy in school. Please thank your parents and carers for filling in our questionnaires.

Yours is a good school where you make good progress. The opportunities that you have in lessons and outside of lessons help you to develop a very strong team and community spirit. You behave well and know how to stay safe and healthy. You are good at helping each other in school and you told us that your lessons were fun. The care, guidance and support that the school provides are excellent and the teaching you receive is good. This is reflected in the comment that for some of you, 'school feels like a second home'. Your school is well managed and led and has extremely strong partnerships with other schools and agencies which are a real benefit to you and your families.

We have asked your teachers to continue to focus on improvements in English and mathematics. You and your families can help by making sure you attend school regularly and by working with your teachers to achieve the very best you can. Developing your reading, writing and mathematic skills will help you to prepare for the next stage in your education.

Thank you for your help during the inspection.

Yours sincerely,

Naomi Taylor

Lead inspector

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