

St George's Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104995
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	367363
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Frank Carruthers

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	788
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nick Holt
Headteacher	Mr Steve Smurthwaite
Date of previous school inspection	18 June 2008
School address	St George's Road Wallasey Merseyside CH45 3NF
Telephone number	0151 6386014
Fax number	0151 6388025
Email address	schooloffice@stgeorges.wirral.sch.uk

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

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Thirty-six lessons or parts of lessons were observed involving 33 teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and the Chair and two members of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, school assessments, planning and school policies, including those concerning the safeguarding of pupils. Two hundred and sixty-nine questionnaires were returned by parents or carers, and those from pupils in Key Stage 2 were also read and analysed. Staff also completed a questionnaire.

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

- How well different groups of pupils are performing in school.
- What have been the improvements to provision, and leadership and management since the last inspection.
- Whether the school is doing all it can to promote good attendance.
- How robust all aspects of safeguarding are.

Information about the school

This school is much larger than the average sized primary school and is situated on two sites about one third of a mile apart. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is just below average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is small. The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs and has gained several awards including the Basic Skills Award, Healthy School status, the Sports Gold and Artsmark Gold Awards and Family Works.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides an outstanding education for its pupils. They make good progress and their attainment is high in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6. High levels of attainment have been maintained in recent years and are evident in the current Year 6. Some groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make exceptional progress. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start to their life in school and achieve well, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and this contributes very well to their overall performance in school subjects. They have very good relationships with their teachers and work very well with one another in class. Pupils develop a good understanding of personal safety and how to lead a fit and healthy lifestyle. They take on responsibility with enthusiasm and this is evident in the work of the school council which is involved well in decision-making in school. Pupils develop valuable skills and attitudes to learning for when they move on to secondary school.

The quality of teaching is good and there are several prominent features, such as teachers' relationships with pupils and their use of video and other technology to interest pupils. Teachers make good use of information about how well pupils are doing. The curriculum is outstanding with a number of key strengths, such as its thematic approach which links subjects together very well, the physical education curriculum and the intervention strategies for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All aspects of care, guidance and support are excellent. There is a strong emphasis on promoting the social and emotional development of pupils. In such a large school, young pupils might feel overwhelmed but the focus given to ensuring the transition between and within key stages is exceptional and means pupils thrive. One pupil summarised the quality of the school by saying, 'This is an inspiring school – it helps you to do your best.' The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire agree with this viewpoint.

High quality leadership ensures that the school runs smoothly and all staff are closely involved in its organisation and management through a strong team approach. This is evident in the uniform quality of provision across all key stages and the two sites. Staff know the pupils well and have a very good grasp of how well the school is performing. The school's self-evaluation is based on excellent analysis of data and leads to prompt action to tackle any comparative weaknesses. One action plan yet to be fully completed, however, concerns the school's promotion of community cohesion. Senior leaders are supported well by the governing body, whose members offer a wide range of expertise and experience as well as significant challenge. Partnerships with other schools and agencies benefit pupils' learning exceptionally well. The effectiveness of the school's approach to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination is excellent. Because some of the improvements made since the last inspection are recent, for

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example, in tracking pupils' progress, the school's capacity to sustain improvement is good. The school provides outstanding value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Act upon the school's audit and plan to promote community cohesion in the wider community and help to raise pupils' awareness of other cultures.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' achievement and enjoyment of learning are outstanding. Most children start in the nursery with levels of attainment that are expected for their age. Throughout all three key stages, pupils' progress is good. In lessons they listen very well to both adults and one another. They show real enthusiasm and concentrate well. When Year 4 pupils were investigating the function of plant roots they were excited and yet behaved responsibly, handling equipment and the plants carefully. As a result, they extended their learning very well, even beginning to understand the importance of surface area in the root structure. Pupils talk with real depth about projects they have undertaken. The quality of their written work is often exceptional and they display pride in their work. The very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as their classmates and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities often make outstanding progress enabling them to reach the levels expected of all pupils in Year 6. This is because of the high quality specialist provision the school provides.

The contribution that pupils make to the life of the school and the wider community is good overall, though stronger in school than in the local community. The way the school promotes healthy living has been recognised in the achievement of the Healthy School status and the Sports Gold Award. Many pupils support the good range of extra-curricular sporting activities. Moreover, in recent months pupils have been researching costs and supplies in a project to set up stalls selling fruit. These skills contribute well to pupils' understanding of finance and positive lifestyles. Levels of attendance match the national average for primary schools and the school promotes the importance of good attendance well, for example by refusing to authorise holidays taken in term-time. The pupils' overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, though not as strong in cultural development.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
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?

A key feature of the teaching is that it is never less than good across all year groups. In Year 6, teaching is outstanding and there are examples of outstanding practice in Years 2 and 4. Teachers ask questions and set tasks for pupils that challenge the different groups of pupils in their class exceptionally well. Gifted and talented pupils are often set challenging tasks to complete on their own. As a result, this well-focused teaching promotes the good achievement of all groups of pupils. Staff make excellent use of new technology to stimulate pupils' interest and pupils use laptops and notebooks regularly in class to good effect. Teachers' marking in English is excellent, helping pupils to understand the next steps in their learning extremely well, though this is not as evident in mathematics. Senior staff have identified this comparative weakness and are reviewing the marking policy.

The curriculum has been significantly enhanced by the International Primary Curriculum, which not only builds on the existing strong links between subjects, but also encourages excellent skills of collaboration as well as individual research. Links between subjects are planned exceptionally well and help pupils to make coherent sense of their learning. Another highly effective feature has been the introduction of in-school intensive support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, catering for up to twenty pupils at a time. Monitoring the progress of these pupils has shown significant gains in their self-confidence and attainment in basic skills. This excellent outcome has been

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achieved at a much lower cost than alternative arrangements and other schools locally are beginning to look to it as a model of good practice. Further strong features include specialist teaching in physical education, comprehensive personal, social and health education and modern foreign languages.

Pastoral care has been maintained at the high standard found at the last inspection. Pupils' welfare is monitored closely and there is an excellent range of partnerships with other agencies and networks of schools to promote their well-being. The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs on both sites, which are popular, promote the welfare of the pupils well and are valued by parents and carers. Transition arrangements both into school and on to secondary school are as strong as those between year groups and the two sites. This comment from a parent summed up the attitude of a good number of parents and carers, 'Despite this being a very large school, it feels like a small village school – all of the staff know all of the children and most of the parents and there is a very friendly atmosphere.'

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leadership team provide outstanding leadership. They have devised a highly effective management structure to cater for the different key stages and the split in Key Stage 2 between the two sites. All senior and middle managers share the ambition to continue to improve provision and maintain high standards. They have an excellent understanding of how well the school is performing through recent improvements to the tracking systems and excellent monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. With these tools they identify comparative areas of weakness and take action to overcome them. For example, the gap between the standards reached by pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are not was similar to that found in most primary schools. This year, thanks to a concerted effort to focus support, the gap has been narrowed in English and mathematics, especially so in mathematics. This success is an example of the school's highly effective promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling of discrimination.

The governing body is fully involved in evaluating the work of the school and discharges its duties rigorously. All arrangements to safeguard the welfare of pupils are good. Appropriate records are kept and all staff have completed the necessary training on child protection. Partnerships with outside agencies and networks of schools promote the pupils' safety, welfare and learning exceptionally well. Partnerships with parents and carers are good and include regular newsletters, meetings and courses for parents and carers, as

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well as communication via the school website. Actions to promote community cohesion are satisfactory overall, being good within school, satisfactory in the local community but at an early stage in developing pupils' awareness of other cultures more widely.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children achieve well in the Nursery and Reception Years. They make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development in the nursery and good progress in all areas of learning over the whole key stage. Boys' writing has been a focus of attention in recent years and there are very good opportunities for mark making to promote their interest and improve skills. By the end of the Reception Year, most children have reached the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning and some are working above those goals.

Provision is good. The learning environment is vibrant and stimulating, especially indoors. There is a good balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by children. Topics, such as a recent one on Pirates, are inventive, promote imaginative play very well and form the basis of much valuable learning in language and number. For example, children enjoyed throwing a large dice to count forwards and backwards as they 'walked the plank'. Assessments and records to celebrate the unique nature of each child are a particular strength. The welfare of all children is closely monitored by key adults so that children are secure and feel safe.

Leadership and management of the key stage are good, although the leader does not have a complete overview of provision, including data concerning the attainment of children on entry to the nursery. This led to an inaccurate perception by the key stage leader of the children's starting points. Planning is detailed and all adults are trained well for their roles. Links with parents and carers are very strong and benefit the children's learning very well.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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 overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded expressed highly positive views of the school. They greatly value the welcoming atmosphere the staff generate. They appreciate how the school helps their children to achieve well and almost all report that their children enjoy school. They judge that the school is well led and managed and that teaching is good. They consider their children are well looked after and taught how to be safe. About a quarter of parents and carers wrote comments on the questionnaire, many highly supportive of the school.

Inspectors consider the comments to be a reflection of the good partnerships the school has with parents and carers. A few parents and carers wrote that they would like more information about school events and how their child is doing.

Inspectors note that the school provides them with regular reports on progress through meetings and written reports, which indicate the levels that the children are achieving. In addition, there are regular newsletters on school events. A few parents and carers expressed concern about the behaviour of a very few pupils in one year group. Inspectors explored this and found the school is taking appropriate action to bring the standard of behaviour of these pupils up to the very high standard of the overwhelming majority of pupils in school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St George's 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 269 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 788 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	159	59	104	39	4	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	189	70	76	28	3	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	129	48	131	49	9	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	153	57	105	39	10	4	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	162	60	99	37	7	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	128	48	122	45	16	6	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	111	41	142	53	11	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	138	51	111	41	11	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	136	51	118	44	8	3	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	111	41	125	46	19	7	8	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	107	40	131	49	23	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	142	53	118	44	7	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	167	62	92	34	10	4	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.



6 July 2011

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St George's Primary School, Wallasey CH45 3NF

It was a great pleasure to inspect your school. You were all extremely friendly and helpful and we enjoyed finding out from you how you are getting on. We particularly enjoyed the meetings we held with the school council and other pupils.

Your school is providing you with an outstanding education. You make good progress in lessons and, by the time you leave at the end of Year 6, most of you reach high standards in English and mathematics. This is because the teaching you receive is good and you work hard. Your behaviour is excellent and this means you learn well. You take on responsibilities well and know how to look after yourselves and lead a fit, healthy lifestyle. You told us how much you enjoy the activities in school. The curriculum you are taught has lots of very interesting parts to it. School leaders do an excellent job. The way in which staff check how well you are doing makes sure that none of you is slipping behind is good. The staff take outstanding care of you all so that you feel safe and have someone to turn to if you have need. They have built up excellent links with other services and schools to very good effect, for example, in helping you when you transfer to secondary school.

Part of our job is to identify how the school can be even better. There is one improvement for staff to make.

- Staff should try to help you to understand more about other cultures, for example, by making links with schools and places of worship outside your local area and overseas.

Please continue to work hard and enjoy school. I send you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Frank Carruthers

Lead Inspector

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