

St George's Church of England Primary School, Chorley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119466
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379810
Inspection dates	21–22 May 2012
Lead inspector	Gordon Alston

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	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tim Wilby
Headteacher	Andrew Purcell
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Gordon Alston
Declan McCauley

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 23 lessons taught by nine teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, parents, carers and school staff. Inspectors listened to pupils read and discussed the work they have been doing in class this academic year. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school self-evaluation summary, the school improvement plan, safeguarding documents and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors analysed 126 questionnaires from parents and carers as well as questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

St George's is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school meets the current floor standards which are the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The school has achieved Healthy School status and been accredited with the Activemark and Investors in People awards.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- This is an outstanding school. Pupils make excellent progress in both their academic and personal development. Achievement is outstanding. The vast majority, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make rapid and sustained progress year on year from their starting points. Overall, children enter school with expected levels of attainment, except in their language skills which are not as well developed as their skills in other areas of learning, and reach significantly above average levels in English and in mathematics by Year 6.
- Teaching and learning are outstanding overall. Teachers make learning highly relevant and great fun. In outstanding lessons, good use is made of the electronic whiteboard as a teaching tool; however, teachers' skills in using it are variable. Lesson planning is a strength and teachers make excellent use of assessment to determine the next steps for learning. Individual pupil's targets are in place in writing which pupils say help them to identify what they need to do next. This process is not as strong in mathematics.
- Pupils have very positive relationships with one another and their behaviour is excellent. They have excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils reflect sensitively on moral and spiritual issues in assemblies, such as forgiveness, and in lessons. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers say their children enjoy school and feel safe and inspectors share these views.
- The headteacher, senior managers and the governing body provide excellent leadership and management. The very effective management of teaching and performance is instrumental in the drive to lift all teaching to its highest level, outstanding! Accurate self-evaluation is based on sharply-focused monitoring and has led to all round improvement since the school's previous inspection. This strength, coupled with the determination of all staff to meet the needs of every pupil, ensures that the school has an excellent capacity to continue improving. The rich and stimulating curriculum inspires and motivates pupils well and offers a very wide range of enrichment activities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - extending the current system of allocating pupils with individualised targets in writing to mathematics
 - ensuring all teachers make the best use of information and communication technology facilities as a teaching tool in lessons.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

When children start school their skills and abilities are generally at the level expected for their age. They make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and reach above average levels by the time they reach Year 1. Learning is very effective in class because of the well-organised environment. This provides many exciting learning opportunities, which enable children to develop their reading, writing and speaking skills highly effectively and thus achieve extremely well. For example, children made very good progress with their early writing skills when, as part of their 'mini beast' topic, they were provided with colourful pictures of insects and asked to write a sentence to describe them. In addition, communication skills are enhanced because adults are skilled in modelling language and take every opportunity to encourage discussions while children are socialising.

School data show that pupils make consistently rapid and sustained progress in every class from Year 1 to Year 6 and this has been maintained over the last three years. Attainment in Year 6 is significantly above average in English and mathematics, which represents outstanding progress from their starting points. Attainment in writing, although not quite as high as reading and mathematics, remains above average and is improving rapidly because of new initiatives. For example, the excellent opportunities pupils have to apply their skills in different contexts. Attainment in reading at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is significantly above average. Learning in lessons is impressive. Pupils of all ages articulate their views clearly, demonstrating confident use of language. They are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage of education.

The vast majority of parents and carers feel that their children are making good progress in school and almost all pupils agree that they 'work really hard'. Progress is typically outstanding in lessons. Careful use of data, rigorous monitoring in lessons and regular tracking ensure that any variance in progress is tackled quickly. As one Year 5 pupil said, 'Learning is fantastic.'

All sizeable groups of pupils make rapid progress, including those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, learning English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Intensive support programmes ensure that children with Down's syndrome make exceptional progress.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching over time is outstanding because it leads to significantly above average outcomes and fosters determination to succeed. Almost all parents and carers feel that their children are taught effectively and pupils say that teaching is 'absolutely spot on'. As one parent said, 'Teachers seem to be able to making learning such great fun, my child talks about what she has done in her lessons with great enthusiasm.'

Teachers have extremely in-depth subject knowledge, very high expectations and plan a range of activities that inspire and enthuse pupils in lessons. Excellent links across subjects provide practical experiences that make learning more relevant to pupils and develop their curiosity. For example, Year 5 pupils linked their literacy work, on using expressive features to create suspense, with their technology skills to develop a 'photo-story' using the text. Every opportunity is taken to promote pupils' learning, develop reflective thinking and independent skills and to teach collaborative skills. Teachers' skills in using electronic whiteboards as a teaching tool during lessons are variable, resulting in missed opportunities at times, to further extend pupils' learning.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, the outstanding teaching of early reading skills and the regular sessions linking letters and the sounds they make, provide a very good foundation for children to learn to read. In Key Stage 2, guided reading sessions encourage pupils to analyse texts and respond to authors' use of language.

Teachers plan exceptionally well for different groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Activities and resources match their needs and consequently they make excellent progress. Teaching assistants skilfully support these pupils in lessons and use intervention skills well to help them to think for themselves. The 'success criteria', which identify precisely what pupils need to do in lessons, help pupils to understand what level of work they should complete. Teachers' feedback to pupils is of a very high quality and very perceptive marking informs pupils about the next steps in their learning and gives them opportunities to respond to teachers' comments. Pupils have individual targets in writing and these are shared in lessons, so that pupils focus on them and improve their skills. Targets for mathematics are not as well developed.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The school is a very calm and orderly community. Pupils take a strong lead in promoting and engaging in outstanding behaviour, which is manifest in their class and school rules. They relish the opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school. Outstanding behaviour is the norm at St George's. Pupils know the high standards of behaviour expected of them and meet these even when unsupervised. Around the school, they play well together and are very kind to one another. Relationships are excellent. Older pupils understand their responsibility to model good behaviour and safe practice. They ensure that, as well as looking after the younger children in the playground and around school, they help them to understand how to behave well. Within lessons, attitudes to learning are

exemplary. Pupils listen attentively, contribute to discussions confidently and work extremely hard. Pupils know they are valued as individuals. In lessons and in discussions, they display a maturity which is frequently beyond their years.

Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They have confidence in the school's procedures for keeping them safe and say they feel very secure at school. This view is confirmed by parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire. Discussions with pupils indicate that they understand what constitutes bullying in all its various forms. They are very confident in their ability to resolve any potential conflicts for themselves. An analysis of the completed questionnaires sent out by the school for pupils confirmed these judgements. All pupils felt that behaviour is good and that they feel safe in school. Attendance is consistently above average.

Leadership and management

The headteacher is very passionate in his belief that the school must provide the very best. He gives a very strong strategic steer to achieve this aim and has created an enthusiastic leadership team. Motivation is high. A positive, 'we can do even better' culture in which no barriers are seen as insurmountable pervades the school. Leadership has been devolved highly successfully to subject leaders. Effective systems for monitoring and evaluation are well embedded. Analysis of performance is very detailed and leads to actions that continue to raise pupils' attainment. Success is evident in the improvement in writing attainment, which is now almost as high as attainment in reading and mathematics. Staff collaborate to establish the good features expected to be evident in every lesson. Expectations are high and any concerns are resolved promptly by effective professional development. Sharing of best practice and a coaching approach has resulted in teaching, curriculum and care of exceptional quality. This high quality is also evident in the provision offered to pupils before and after school. The school's capacity to improve ensures it is extremely well placed to move forward.

The governing body is highly committed to carrying out its statutory duties, and play a part in setting the school's strategic direction. Members ensure that safeguarding is effective and that procedures fully meet requirements. The governing body and leaders promote equality of opportunity extremely well. There is no discrimination and any potential differences in the performances of groups are anticipated, interventions swiftly put in place or the curriculum modified so that progress is accelerated and gaps do not develop.

The creative curriculum offers a very broad range of themed activities which are developed to maximum effect with contributions from pupils. Consequently, the school provides rich and memorable experiences that prepare pupils exceptionally well for the future. Many excellent opportunities through the curriculum and in assemblies promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The diversity of cultures within the school is celebrated and pupils are encouraged to consider other faiths and cultures through projects, such as 'Different Faiths'. The school provides pupils with exceptional opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument and perform in concerts. A very wide range of well-attended, after-school clubs provides many opportunities for sports, arts and music activities.

Engagement with parents and carers is very effective. Almost all who responded to the questionnaire say that the school helps them to support their children's learning.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

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

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

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

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.



23 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St George's Church of England Primary School, Chorley,
Chorley, PR7 3JU**

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated your courtesy and friendliness. We were very impressed by how hard you work, and as a result, the very high standards you achieve. We really enjoyed talking to you in lessons and watching you play so well together. It was wonderful to see how keen you all are in lessons and how well you respond to learning challenges.

The outstanding teaching you receive is helping you to learn lots and the importance of how to respect and care for one another. Your behaviour is impeccable and you are a real credit to your families and your teachers. Across the school, it was a delight to see how well you are developing your reading and writing skills. I really enjoyed seeing one class learn about 'Shape' poems and in another class, pupils trying to create a feeling of suspense in their stories. Watching the Early Years Foundation Stage children plant their beans they had cultivated in the classroom in the outside garden was fantastic.

Your headteacher, senior staff and members of the governing body lead and manage the school exceptionally well and are working very hard to help you do even better. To help them in this I have asked them to try and get even more outstanding teaching in your lessons especially in the use of the electronic whiteboard. I have also asked that the way teachers set you individual targets in writing is also used in mathematics. You can help by being responsible for your own targets, deciding and recording yourselves when you have 'hit' them. Many of you said you how much targets helped you improve.

Once again, thank you for making us so welcome. Continue being kind to each other; help your teachers and work hard to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Alston
Lead Inspector

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