

# St George's Church of England Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	110424
<b>Local authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	378098
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30–31 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Wendy Ratcliff HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	145
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Kirchheimer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Toby Long (Acting Headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22–23 March 2007
<b>School address</b>	White Lion Road Amersham HP7 9HX
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<b>Age group</b>	4–7
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Wendy Ratcliff

Her Majesty's Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days notice. The inspector visited ten lessons taught by six teachers and their teaching support staff. Eight of these were joint observations with the acting headteacher. Observations included teaching during child-initiated activities when children move freely between activities both indoors and outdoors, and small groups of focused teaching and four group phonics (linking letters with the sounds they make) sessions led by teachers and teaching support staff. The inspector listened to pupils from Year 1 and Year 2 reading. Meetings were held with a group of Key Stage 1 pupils, representatives from the governing body and school staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at relevant documentation, including data on pupils' attainment, progress and attendance, the school development plan, key policies and evidence of the school's monitoring. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. She analysed 109 paper questionnaires from parents and carers and 21 completed by staff.

## Information about the school

St George's Church of England Infant School is a smaller than average school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and around a quarter come from minority ethnic groups. Around 17% of pupils speak English as an additional language. Pupils come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is similar to that found in other schools. The numbers of pupils attending the school has increased over time and continues to grow. The acting headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

A new classroom is currently being built and is due to open for September 2012. The number of pupils on roll will potentially increase from 145 to 180.

There is registered early years provision on the school site, which includes before and after school sessions for pupils of the school. This provision is run by a private provider and does not form part of this inspection.

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

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

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. Good leadership and management have brought about secure improvements after a dip in Key Stage 1 results following the last inspection and, as a result, pupils' attainment is rising well. The school is not yet outstanding as higher ability pupils are not making sufficiently good rates of progress and monitoring of the school's work by middle leaders is not fully embedded.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils are confident, enthusiastic learners who work hard. They make good progress in lessons and overtime. Some groups of pupils who had not attained as well in the past are now making accelerated progress as a result of the school's actions, and are reaching the same level of attainment as their peers nationally.
- Teaching is good overall. Many lessons are exciting and capture pupils' interests well. Most teachers convey clear expectations of learning. Tasks and activities are often well matched to the wide range of ability within each class. However, activities are not consistently challenging for more able pupils and do not always encourage independent learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good, both in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous. Pupils show a mature understanding of their school values and have many opportunities to explore their meaning; for example, pupils show compassion towards each other. Pupils feel safe and instances of bullying are rare.
- The acting headteacher has gained the support of the whole school community to drive improvement. 'The school has had a burst of energy with the new head' is just one typical comment shared by a parent. Although good overall, the leadership of teaching and the management of performance are not outstanding because there is some variation in the contribution of middle leaders to these aspects and how effectively groups of pupils' progress is tracked across subjects.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sharpen the focus of middle leaders in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in their subject area and across the school by:
  - making full and effective use of the pupil tracking data to ensure all pupils are achieving to the best of their ability
  - ensuring all teaching progresses towards outstanding by eliminating inconsistent practice.
- Improve the progress of more able pupils by ensuring that work is better matched to their abilities and provides more challenging activities to encourage independent learning.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers are right to be delighted with how the school meets their child's individual needs and the progress their children are making. One parent reported, 'Our daughter is thriving and we are really pleased with the care and level of education she is receiving.'

Pupils make good progress over time from their starting points and achieve broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. Achievement is good because teachers know the capabilities of their pupils well and systematically build on their basic skills as they move up through the school. Most children start school with skills that are similar to those expected for their age, although this has varied in previous years, where skills were typically lower than expected. Pupils make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Outcomes at the end of Reception Year are improving year on year because teachers ensure both the indoor and outdoor learning environments are well planned, exciting and based on pupils' interests. For example, the children's imagination was captured as they built their castle and took different roles such as knights, princesses, scoundrels and a 'guard spy'. Children considered how they could make the stairs of the castle more stable and worked cooperatively with large blocks, crates and planks to make stairs that did not 'wobble'.

By the time they start Year 1, children's skills have improved and are now better than those expected for their age. Pupils' good progress continues through Key Stage 1, where they remain enthusiastic about learning, particularly in reading and writing. In one lesson, pupils were keen to act out their conversation between two characters in preparation for writing a story. Pupils make good progress in reading as a result of a rigorous programme to teach phonics. Pupils enjoy reading and use their acquired skills for decoding well in order to read new words. Pupils' work reflects the good progress that is now being made in writing due to increased opportunities to write across the curriculum.

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Adults know the pupils well and quickly identify when pupils require additional support. Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those pupils with English as an additional language benefit from small group intervention and make good progress from their starting points. The difference between the attainment of different groups of pupils such as those eligible for free school meals has closed over time. However, although more able pupils do reach above average standards in mathematics, reading and writing, they do not make as much progress as their peers from their higher starting points.

**Quality of teaching**

Teaching is good and parents and carers agree. Adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage demonstrate a secure understanding of how children learn. Assessment is used well to check progress and inform teaching. For example, there is a focus on encouraging creative development as it is recognised that not all children are confident in this aspect of learning. Staff ensure there is a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities, which encourages children to make choices in their play.

Teachers are enthusiastic and motivate pupils through well-planned projects that capture the pupils' interest, such as 'World Week'. Pupils are keen to research and explore the different cultures and traditions from the country from which their class name originates, such as Paris, Sydney or Beijing class. Effective teaching of phonics is enabling pupils to use their developing skills in reading as they carry out such research.

In the vast majority of lessons, work is well matched to pupils' needs because staff make accurate assessments of pupils' learning and engage them well. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the pupils were totally absorbed in calculating the price of clown fish using partitioning as they purchased items from the pet shop. However, on occasions, there is a lack of challenge and expectation for the most able pupils to encourage independent learning.

The school's active promotion of pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is evident in lessons as teachers have high expectations with regard to behaviour, cooperation and teamwork. In a mixed Year 1 and 2 class, pupils had the opportunity to explore values and beliefs and discuss forgiveness.

Teaching assistants play a key role in providing one-to-one support in class for those learners with particular learning needs as well as leading small group intervention sessions. Such support is having a significant impact on the progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language. One parent commented, 'My child has a statement of special needs and St George's has been excellent at recognising and addressing his needs.'

Pupils are developing skills in assessing their own work as they use a traffic light

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system to let their teacher know if they found the work easy, difficult or needed help. The majority of pupils know their targets for writing and refer to the lesson objective in mathematics. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide child-friendly comments that inform pupils what they have done well and what they need to improve. However, this practice is not consistently applied across classes and subject areas.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

All parents and carers consider their children are well looked after and the inspector agrees with their views. One parent wrote, 'I think this is a wonderful school with teachers and staff who really care about their pupils.' Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high and pupils were observed to behave extremely well during collective worship and the country dancing in celebration of the Queen's Jubilee. Discussions with pupils show good behaviour to be typical.

Pupils enthusiastically told the inspector that they get on well together and enjoy school life. Pupils have positive relationships with adults who provide very positive role models. Adults raise pupils' awareness of the effects of behaviour on others and provide reminders to take turns and consider the feelings of others. Children in Reception class referred to being 'really nice friends' as they took turns during role play. Year 2 pupils take their responsibility in escorting Reception children safely back to their class after phonics sessions extremely seriously.

The school deals effectively with any incident of poor behaviour. Interventions such as the nurture group and social skills group contribute to the improvement of behaviour over time as pupils extend their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils say they feel safe and clearly articulated their anti-bullying charter and explained how 'bullying is cruel not cool'. They know who to speak to if they have concerns.

Pupils are keen to attend school. Although attendance is average, it is improving quickly. New strategies to monitor and encourage regular attendance are applied with rigour. The governing body are proactive in reminding parents and carers about the importance of regular attendance. This is celebrated through 'star attendance' in weekly newsletters and the presentation of certificates of attendance.

### **Leadership and management**

The acting headteacher is very much at the heart of the school's recent success. Leaders have a very clear grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their focus on improving teaching and learning of different groups of pupils, underpinned by effective management of teachers' performance, has resulted in well-targeted support to enhance most pupils' progress. This illustrates the school's good capacity for further improvement.

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The school has correctly identified the need to support middle leaders to embed their roles. They recognise the need to sharpen their focus in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning across the school and use this information to eliminate inconsistencies in teaching and accelerate pupils' progress further. For example, progress meetings are currently held each term and whilst these have been successful in providing additional support for pupils who are in danger of underachieving and enabled gaps between groups to close, the school is now considering the timing and frequency of such meetings to ensure interventions are even more rapid.

The governing body are highly supportive and challenge the school. They are fully engaged in school life and have helped the school to move forward. All requirements for ensuring children's health, well-being and safeguarding are in place, regularly reviewed and effectively implemented. The school works with outside agencies to ensure families and their children receive the correct level of support.

The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination well. Careful adaptations are made so all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced through a curriculum that develops an ethos where all pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected. Enrichment activities are good, such as a visit by the Black Hole Planetarium to support Year 1 and 2's project on space and the planets. The school has developed good partnerships with other schools in order to promote pupils' understanding of a socially varied Britain.

The school has promoted links with parents and carers by delivering workshops on literacy and behaviour. Parents and carers appreciate the work of the staff. One parent wrote, 'Teachers at St George's are extremely committed and spend a lot of time planning fun events for the children. They are very accessible.'

## 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	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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](http://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.
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.

**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.**



1 June 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St George's Church of England Infant School, Amersham HP7 9HX**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I came to visit your school. I very much enjoyed my visit, talking to you and all the adults, and seeing the exciting things that you do. I particularly enjoyed your country dancing and singing as you celebrated the Queen's jubilee. Your school is a good place to learn. Here are some of the reasons why.

- You make good progress in your learning because you are taught well.
- You work hard in lessons and enjoy the exciting activities that the adults plan for you.
- You behave very well and get on very well with each other.
- All the adults take very good care of you and help you to learn.

Your headteacher and adults are determined to help you do the best you can in your learning and they know what they need to improve. I have asked them to:

- raise attainment and improve progress for the more able pupils
- improve how the school checks on how well things are working in different subjects
- improve their teaching so you can learn as much as you can.

I know you will continue to work hard and do your best. Thank you for a very enjoyable visit, and best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Ratcliff  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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