

St George's VC CofE Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique reference number	135055
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	381792
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Merchant

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	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Les Bishton
Headteacher	Rachel Butler
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2009
School address	Plane Tree Close Kidderminster DY10 2HE
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Merchant

Additional Inspector

Anna Smith

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Nineteen lessons or parts of lessons were observed, amounting to 11 hours in total. All seven classroom teachers present at the time of the inspection were observed teaching. Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, the members of the governing body and different groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of the school's work, policy documents and pupils' work. They analysed 84 questionnaires sent in by parents and carers, 103 questionnaires completed by pupils and 24 completed by staff.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs pupils supported by School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A quarter of all pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, the largest group being of Bangladeshi heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a Nursery and in a Reception class.

There have been several recent changes to the leadership of the school. A new headteacher took up post in September 2011 following a period in which the school was led by an interim headteacher. The deputy headteacher is currently on secondment to another school and a temporary deputy headteacher is in post.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils enjoy learning, make good progress and achieve well. Their personal development is also good. The staff and governing body share high ambitions for all pupils whatever their circumstances. It is not an outstanding school because neither teaching nor achievement is outstanding.
- All groups of pupils achieve well from generally low starting points. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average overall and rising in both English and mathematics. Standards in writing, although still broadly average, are hampered because there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise long pieces of writing. By the age of six, nearly all pupils' attainment in reading is above average because of well-planned interventions and a relentless focus on teaching sounds and letters.
- Teaching is good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to explain ideas clearly and to motivate pupils to learn. Teaching assistants work effectively with teachers to support pupils who need extra help. In a minority of lessons work is not planned well enough to meet the learning needs of all pupils, and pupils are given insufficient time to work independently.
- Pupils feel very safe at school. They have a strong understanding of right and wrong, behave consistently well and their attitudes to learning are sometimes outstanding. Pupils collaborate very effectively and persevere at tasks.
- One reason for the school's success is the drive and ambition of the headteacher, which is shared by all staff and governors. Senior staff and the governing body have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because there are good procedures to monitor provision and track pupils' progress. Effective procedures for the management of performance ensure that professional development is targeted well.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in writing by giving pupils more opportunities to practice extended writing across a range of topics.
- Lift the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by:
 - making sure that there is a sharper match of work to pupils' different abilities
 - encouraging pupils to be more active and inquisitive in class, taking more responsibility for their own learning.

A realistic time to meet each of these objectives would be June 2013.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The great majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire think that their children's achievement is good. Inspection evidence supports this view. The analysis of the school's extensive and rigorous data shows that progress made by the various groups of pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, pupils who enter the school with particularly low levels of attainment and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, is good over time. Assessment information, the deployment of well-briefed and skilful teaching assistants and specially tailored resources combine to give effective support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This enables them to overcome many of the difficulties they have in their learning and make progress at the same rates as that of their peers.

Children enter the Nursery class with skills and abilities that are often well below those expected of their age. The social development and communication skills of some pupils are particularly low. Consistently good teaching throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children make good progress in all the areas of learning. They learn and play well together and are very well prepared for reading, gaining a real enthusiasm for stories and books. Consequently, they leave the Reception class working just below their age related expectations.

The work seen by inspectors in lessons confirms the overall picture from test data of good and improving progress, with pupils increasingly able to work at and sometimes above the levels expected for their age as they move up the school. Progress was seen to be good and sometimes outstanding in mathematics, because teachers have high expectations and have rightly focused on developing pupils' curiosity and problem-solving skills. As a consequence, attainment in mathematics is above average by the end of Year 6. Progress is also good in English. Throughout the school, pupils benefit from a consistent and structured approach when learning to

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read. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) and even those that struggle to read or are new to learning English employ well-embedded strategies to build words. By the end of Year 2 attainment in reading is broadly average and is above average by Year 6. Many pupils in Year 6 read enthusiastically and talk clearly and authoritatively about the reasons why they enjoy certain types of books and some of the authors they find engaging. Despite these gains, a minority of pupils have difficulty in explaining their ideas when they have read a text, which in turn inhibits their ability to write well. More generally, pupils are given insufficient opportunity to write at length across a range of topics. Attainment in writing at the end of Year 6 is therefore broadly average.

Pupils are keen to do their best, work purposefully and collaborate willingly; they readily take on roles within teams and support each other's learning. Inspectors saw many examples of pupils' ability to discuss maturely and reflect thoughtfully upon ethical dilemmas. In an exciting Year 3 religious education lesson, for instance, pupils worked with great energy and enthusiasm at designing and making a range of posters and displays to illustrate aspects of 'Fair Trade' across the globe.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is of good quality in most classes. This confirms the positive view of teaching held by most parents and carers. Typically, teaching is lively, tasks and concepts are clearly explained, and activities are carefully designed to challenge the pupils to learn at a swift pace. For example, in a particularly effective Year 2 numeracy lesson, all groups of pupils made fast progress because of the teacher's imaginative methods: pupils were inspired to think of ways of disproving the teacher's method of adding numbers to a sequence; very high expectations and searching questions, spurred all to think and cooperate. Teachers' effective use of 'talking partners', drama, role play and letter and sounds activities help pupils who are new to learning English make good progress in their speaking and writing.

Reading using phonics is taught systematically in the Early Years Foundation Stage and into Key Stage 1 and provides a solid platform for pupils to become confident readers. Teachers ensure that the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are met well by planning activities that are tailored to their individual requirements. Learning support assistants are deployed well and liaise closely with the teacher giving just the right amount of support and encouraging these pupils to be more independent.

Teachers mark books and set targets for improvement thoughtfully and carefully. They are particularly successful in supporting pupils' social and moral development, for instance, by providing many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and small groups. For example, in a Year 5 literacy session pupils eagerly worked in groups successfully to meet the learning objective of describing a character profile of an Olympic athlete. They thoroughly enjoyed the task, listened well and built on each others' ideas, and produced high quality writing.

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Where teaching is less effective, learning and progress are sometimes held back because lesson planning does not meet the needs of the full range of abilities in the class, with the result that a minority of pupils are either not challenged enough or struggle to understand what is required of them. In a few cases, too, opportunities for pupils to learn actively and independently were limited.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils say that they feel safe in school, and parents and carers are unanimous in their agreement. The pupils' good attitudes to learning and hardworking approach are key elements in their enjoyment of school and good achievement. The great majority of parents and carers felt that behaviour in the school was good although a few expressed concerns that their children's lessons were sometimes disrupted by poor behaviour. School records show that behaviour has been consistently good over a period of time and there are very few instances of lessons being disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, name-calling and bullying based on sex or gender, and know how to deal with them. They say that any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.

Attendance is significantly affected by the prolonged absence of a very small number of pupils whose families, against the strong advice of the school, take them on extended leave during term-time. Robust measures taken by the school have improved attendance for some of these children and this has contributed to a rapid rise in attendance overall over the past two years. Apart from these exceptional cases, attendance over time is broadly average and improving rapidly and is above average for the current year so far.

Leadership and management

The headteacher works tenaciously to improve pupils' educational opportunities and communicates her high expectations persuasively to staff. With strong support from her governing body and senior and middle leaders, she has set a precise path for improvement based on accurate self-evaluation. Several initiatives are already embedded and are beginning to make a positive difference to pupils' achievements. A climate has been created where everyone is trying hard to make the school even better. Consequently, teamwork is strong, staff morale is high and pupils' progress is accelerating. There is no hint of complacency and there is a determination from staff at all levels to sustain and build upon the many recent gains. In this way, the school promotes equality for all pupils well and makes sure there is no discrimination on any grounds. This is evident in the school's tracking data, which records any potential barriers to learning for each pupil, identifies any pupils that fall behind and puts interventions in place to accelerate progress.

Good performance management procedures ensure that professional development

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for staff is focused well on strengthening teaching. School leaders have improved the tracking of pupils' progress greatly and this information has been used to hold teachers to account for the achievement of pupils in their classes. The governing body has played an active role by requesting clear and concise data to enable it to monitor the school's performance independently. The school meets all statutory obligations, including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils.

The curriculum is well balanced, building on previous strengths by developing a topic approach that links subjects together very well. Strengths in personal, social and health education contribute to the effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The curriculum for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good and its impact is monitored closely.

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.

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.

15 June 2012

Dear Pupils



**Inspection of St George's VC CofE Primary School and Nursery,
Kidderminster, DY10 2HE**

Thank you so much for a very enjoyable visit to your school. Talking to you about your learning, seeing your lessons, listening to you read and looking at your work and questionnaires helped us to agree that your school provides you with a good quality of education. Here are some of the things we found out that we would like to share with you.

- You make good progress in your learning as you move through the school, especially in reading and mathematics. Your results in national tests at the end of Year 6 are getting better and better and are similar to and sometimes higher than in most other schools.
- Many of your lessons are exciting and your teachers are good at explaining difficult ideas to you.
- You work hard in lessons, help each other well and love learning in pairs and small groups.
- You behave well in lessons and around the school and you told us you feel completely safe.
- Your new headteacher, the governors and your teachers want your school to be even better and know in detail how to make sure that your school continues to improve.

To help the school improve further, we have asked those who lead and manage the school to do two things.

- Make sure that more of you do even better in your writing by giving you more opportunities to write longer pieces of work, especially in topic work.
- When teachers plan activities for you in class, to make sure that it is not too easy, or too hard, but just right for you; and to make sure that you are able to learn more things on your own.

We are sure that you will all continue to work hard for the teachers and to help them to make your school even better. Thank you again for making us so welcome!

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant
Lead inspector

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