

George Spicer Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	101993
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	376653
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2012
Lead inspector	Mehar Brar

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	478
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathy Swatton
Headteacher	Hilary Ballantine
Date of previous school inspection	11 December 2008
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	28–29 June 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Mehar Brar

Additional inspector

Stephen Mellors

Additional inspector

Victoria Turner

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 23 lessons, involving 14 different teachers. They held meetings with senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, parents and carers and with members of the governing body. They took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at curriculum and development plans, monitoring information and samples of pupils' work. In addition, they analysed questionnaire responses from 211 parents and carers, 30 staff and 98 pupils, and took their views into account.

Information about the school

George Spicer is a larger-than-average primary school. The largest group of pupils in the school are of White British heritage with the remaining pupils from a wide range of other ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than at the start of the year is above average. In 2011, the school met the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. There is a breakfast and after-school club that is managed by the governing body. The school has achieved a number of national awards such as Investors in People, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Activemark.

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. Its main strengths are the strong teamwork of the senior leadership team to drive improvement, pupils' good achievement and behaviour. It is not yet outstanding because there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, and because governors are not focused enough on holding the school to account for the impact of its work to improve pupils' learning.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Their attainment is above average by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics because most pupils make good progress from their below average starting points.
- Teaching is good. Most pupils understand clearly what they are expected to learn. Teachers use assessment well to adjust learning in lessons and this helps to develop effective pace and challenge to promote progress. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' use of questioning and introductions to lessons are sometimes overlong.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are eager to learn. They behave well in lessons and around the school because of positive relationships between them and with staff. Pupils feel safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe. Attendance continues to improve and is above average.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's commitment to empowering leaders in the school, combined with clear and ambitious expectations, has built an effective team who have been able to improve the school's performance since the previous inspection, especially in mathematics. The governors support, and to some extent, challenge the school, but recognise that they should hold the school to account better with a sharper focus on evaluating the impact of its work to promote pupils' achievement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers' questioning consistently engages less-confident pupils and also extends more-able pupils
 - ensuring that introductions to lessons and teachers' explanations are not overlong, so that pupils have enough opportunity to learn at their own pace.
- Enable governors to contribute to the development of more outstanding learning through a more rigorous focus on evaluating the impact of improvements on the achievement of pupils.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress from the time they join the school to the end of Year 6. Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire also believe that their children make good progress. Pupils' skills and abilities on entering the school in Reception are rising, but are still below expectations for children of this age. Skill levels are particularly low for language and communication skills and social development. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, are identified early and given support that is well matched to their needs. As a result, they also make good progress. All other groups also make similarly good progress.

Pupils work hard in lessons. Most pupils collaborate well, are able to work without being closely supervised and enjoy the opportunity to discuss their learning with others they are working with. On a few occasions, when less confident pupils need their learning supported or extended, these pupils make slower progress than they should otherwise make. Progress in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology is good. There is an increasing opportunity to use skills gained in these subjects across the whole curriculum, for example when producing a story to explain difficulties in interpreting a train timetable, or reading instructions to arrange different complex shapes in a particular order.

Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is average. Pupils progress well from low starting points. Reading is driven by the desire the school creates in pupils to read for pleasure, and secured by the systematic teaching of phonics. A strong focus on helping pupils link letters and sounds supports pupils to good effect. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils who have been with the school since Reception are able to read age-appropriate texts with understanding. They self-correct any mistakes, and begin to make inferences and deductions. Other groups of pupils are provided with additional support enabling them to develop their reading skills effectively, resulting in the majority of pupils leave Key Stage 1 ready for the more demanding reading at

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Key Stage 2. Pupils in Key Stage 2 build effectively on these skills. A variety of texts such as technical texts, poetry and play scripts and stories are experienced so that pupils develop a widening vocabulary and are able to express themselves imaginatively both orally and writing. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics is above average. Teachers often help pupils apply their learning through problem-solving skills. The school is successful at narrowing the gaps in attainment in English and mathematics between different groups of pupils as they pass through the school.

Quality of teaching

Inspectors found the quality of teaching to be good. This agrees with the views of parents and carers, pupils and staff. Most of the teaching observed during the inspection was good, with some outstanding and satisfactory practice also seen.

Teachers use their secure subject knowledge to provide pupils with a clear understanding of what is expected of them, and how they can take their learning further. The use of assessment to inform planning helps teachers match the demands of lessons to pupils' needs. Additional adults who provide support in the classroom, particularly for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, are well guided by teachers so that they can provide appropriate levels of challenge and support. Typically, across many lessons, teachers adjust their teaching to help maintain good progress by judging how well pupils are completing the activities set for them. The use of guided reading supports the teaching of phonics effectively.

In the best lessons, effective questioning addresses pupils' misconceptions and develops their understanding. For example, in one lesson, the teacher used skilful questioning to help pupils connect patterns and develop rules to help them solve the mathematical puzzles. Pupils were excited by their success and, consequently, worked tirelessly until the end of the lesson. However, this approach is not consistent across the school. At other times, questioning by teachers does not sufficiently target the less-confident pupils to actively engage them in learning as well as it could or challenge more-able pupils sufficiently. On a few occasions, the pace of learning is slowed because pupils of different abilities are not given enough opportunity to learn at different rates because teacher introductions or guidance are overlong.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Observations, analysis of school records and discussions with pupils show that behaviour is good. Staff across the school model the school's values of respect, responsibility and perseverance. The school teaches pupils the personal and social skills they need to settle well into school and most become confident learners. Due to this inclusive approach, pupils across the school are considerate, responsible and consistently courteous to each other and to the adults they meet. They are proud of their school. This was reflected by a pupil who said, 'This is a good school with kind teachers.' They are spoken to as young adults and consequently, they demonstrate an increasing maturity as they move through the school.

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Although there are a few behaviour incidents, the school has continually improved its policies and systems related to behaviour management so that all parents and carers, and most pupils, are confident that behaviour is now managed effectively. Pupils confirm that they have no concerns about bullying of any sort, and that name-calling and verbal abuse are rare. There have been no recorded incidents of homophobic bullying. The school actively teaches pupils about the language associated with prejudice and most pupils feel part of a harmonious school community. The school deals effectively with the rare incidents of bullying and the very few incidents of racist behaviour that do occur.

Parents and carers overwhelmingly affirm that their children feel safe in school. Almost all pupils agree. Pupils are taught about safety in different contexts, such as internet safety, road safety and keeping safe around strangers. As a result, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They also show concern for the safety of others. As one parent indicated, 'Pupils in this school look after each other.' The school is persistent about promoting good attendance and, consequently, attendance is above average.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching well, and provide good coaching, mentoring and opportunities for professional development so that teachers are able to improve their skills. The headteacher has led improvement across the school. The curriculum has greater focus on the application of skills, achievement in mathematics has improved, behaviour management has become more consistent, and pupils' behaviour continues to improve. In addition, there is now more accurate tracking of pupils' progress throughout the school. The school is therefore more confident about its assessments, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and is able to target teaching more effectively and, when required, provide extra support that is well matched to pupils' needs. Evaluation of the work of the school involves all leaders, including the governing body. These evaluations, though, do not focus rigorously enough on the impact of improvements on pupils' achievement. This limits the ability of governors to challenge the school to improve further.

The curriculum has good breadth and balance, with numerous visits, project work, and events and extra-curricular activities. The focus on key skills, and their application across the curriculum, is assisting progress, particularly at Key Stage 2. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education effectively. Parents and carers spoke proudly about how the school helps pupils develop an interest in other faiths and cultures as well as their own.

School leaders work effectively to ensure there is no discrimination, and promotion of equality of opportunity ensures that they have a clear picture of any underachievement by individuals and groups. The school provides good additional guidance and support for those pupils who need it. The breakfast and after-school

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clubs provide a good service for parents and carers, and they help pupils to develop their social skills. The governing body ensures the health and safety of all staff and pupils, and safeguarding requirements meet requirements.

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.



1 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of George Spicer Primary School, Enfield EN1 1YF

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the team when we came to your school. We enjoyed meeting you. Thank you for talking to us about your work, and sharing your views about your school. You helped us to understand your school better.

The inspection team judged your school to be a good school. Your teachers help you settle into the school and help you learn well so that you enjoy school and, by the end of Year 6, you make good progress in English and mathematics. We agreed with the feedback you gave us through questionnaires that teaching is good. We also agree that you feel safe in school and behaviour is good. We were impressed that you care for the safety of others as well as your own safety.

Your headteacher, school governors and all the staff in the school are working hard to help all of you learn even better. To help with this, we have asked them to:

- Make sure that when teachers ask questions they always include those of you who are less confident, and also ask harder questions to those of you who are ready for this.
- Keep introductions to lessons not too long so you have plenty of opportunity to learn at your own pace.
- Help school governors judge how well the school is improving by checking, more rigorously, how well changes in your school help all of you to learn better.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it become even better by continuing to do your best.

Yours sincerely

Mehar Brar
Lead inspector

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