

St George's Infant School and Nursery

Barrington Road, Colchester, CO2 7RW

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils are achieving well.
- Children in Nursery and Reception have a successful start to school life and make good progress.
- Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2 and attainment by the end of Year 2 is average.
- Teaching has improved and pupils achieve well from the good teaching.
- Teachers have good relationships with their class. In most lessons, teachers set demanding tasks which help pupils to progress well.
- Pupils show a keen interest in their learning. Their good attitudes and behaviour support their learning well.
- Pupils feel safe and well cared for by staff.
- Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher's leadership, vision and drive are at the heart of the school's improvement.
- Teamwork among the staff is strong and leaders, governors and staff have successfully raised achievement and improved teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In just a few lessons, teachers give work that is too easy or too difficult for some pupils.
- Occasionally, learning does not move on at a quick enough pace.
- A few disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make less progress than most other pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons or part-lessons.
- They held discussions with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, governors, parents and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 23 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and the school's own parental survey.
- Twenty five questionnaires from staff were analysed.
- Inspectors examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' plans, pupils' work and the school's planning for improvement.

Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Matthew Klimcke	Additional Inspector
Christine Newell	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized infant school.
- Most of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- An above-average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils in local authority care, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those with a parent in the armed services.
- The school educates all pupils onsite. There is no alternative educational provision off the school site.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and ensure that all teaching is, at least, good, by making sure that:
 - teachers always set work at the right level for pupils of all abilities
 - learning in lessons always moves on at a quick pace.
- Accelerate the progress of the few pupils among those who are disabled or who have special educational needs who are making less progress than the others, by:
 - having a sharper view of how well these pupils are doing and what they need to improve
 - always directing guidance and support to help the individual pupils who need it.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Since the last inspection, pupils' achievement has improved from satisfactory to good. Children usually enter the Nursery with knowledge, understanding and skills lower than those typically expected for their age, particularly in language and social skills. Improvements to the teaching and learning approaches in the Early Years Foundation Stage mean that children make good progress.
- Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2, attainment is average in reading, writing and mathematics. This level of attainment is creditable, given children's starting points.
- Most disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because of good teaching and the guidance and support that they receive individually or in small groups. However, there is a small group of these pupils who are making less progress than other pupils.
- Good use is made of additional funding to teach and support the pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium. Individual literacy programmes and additional class support contribute to these pupils' good progress. Consequently, for example, pupils eligible for free school meals are attaining standards close to those of most pupils nationally, and higher than those of similar pupils.
- The more-able pupils usually have hard enough work in lessons. Just occasionally, tasks are too easy and their learning declines.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because of the school's effective programme for the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Furthermore, pupils are keen to read at school and at home.
- Raising achievement in writing has been a real success. During the last three years, attainment has risen from low to average levels. Pupils' writing is often interesting and imaginative. Grammar, punctuation and spelling have improved. Handwriting by Year 2 is mostly well formed and joined. For example, Year 2 pupils made good progress in writing their own version of Hansel and Gretel. They described the characters and the setting using well-chosen words and took care and pride in their presentation.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. They acquire knowledge, skills and understanding well. Pupils apply their skills well in solving problems. For example, in a Year 2 physical education lesson, pupils made good progress in directing their partners to a set point using mathematical vocabulary, such as 'clockwise', 'anticlockwise', 'quarter turn', 'half turn' and so on.

The quality of teaching is good

- There have been good improvements to teaching since the previous inspection. Work is more demanding, and the use of questioning and opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills have been strengthened.
- Teachers establish strong relationships with pupils and manage their classes well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully promoted. As a result, pupils

learn well together and show consideration and respect for others.

- In Nursery and Reception classes, children are provided with a range of interesting activities inside and outdoors. There is a good blend of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. Children have good opportunities to explore, be creative and learn on their own.
- Teachers set clear learning intentions for lessons and effectively share these with the class. Pupils know and understanding what they are expected to learn. Specific learning points are set to guide pupils' learning.
- Essential reading skills are effectively taught through a well-structured programme. Pupils are successfully encouraged to read at home and at school. In a Year 2 class, pupils made good progress in exploring the different 'ou' sounds, after the teacher first used and demonstrated the sound.
- Teachers' explanations and instructions are clear and informative and promote learning well. Questioning is used effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their understanding of new learning.
- Teachers use drama, role play, visual stimuli and demonstration well to promote pupils' writing skills. For example, Year 1 pupils successfully acted out the story of 'The Three Little Pigs'. Their expressions, feelings and newly acquired words generated good ideas for writing.
- In most lessons, teachers make good use of the information about pupils' attainment to plan teaching and to match tasks to pupils' different abilities. As a result, pupils are suitably challenged to learn and make good progress in acquiring knowledge and deepening their understanding. Occasionally, this information is not fully used and tasks are too easy or too difficult for some pupils and learning slows.
- There are a few out of the group of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs pupils who are making less progress than the others. This is because the teaching and support are not carefully suited to their needs. Therefore, these pupils make the progress expected, rather than good progress. However, in general, teaching assistants are used well and usually make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who need additional help with social skills or literacy.
- Very occasionally, the pace of learning slows. In these situations, pupils' rate of learning is hindered by the teacher talking for too long at the start of the lesson and pupils are not moved on to the main task soon enough. For example, pupils sitting on the carpet listen to the teacher, but their passive learning in these situations is, sometimes, unhelpful to them learning actively and doing things for themselves.
- Pupils have good opportunities to check and review they own learning. During lessons, teachers provide useful feedback to pupils which helps them to improve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The good behaviour and safety reported in the previous inspection has been maintained and built upon. Pupils' positive attitudes and behaviour contribute well to their good progress.
 - Children in the Nursery class settle well into the school because of the warm and positive relationships established with adults. They enjoy the activities provided and they learn and play well with the other children.
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- Parents who responded to Parent View stated that their children were safe, well looked after and that the school promotes good behaviour. These positive views reflect the findings of the inspection.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are enthusiastic and keen learners. They behave well in lessons and around the school. Records of incidents show that behaviour is typically good over time.
- Pupils are cooperative, considerate and well behaved. For example, in a successful assembly, they appreciated and celebrated the achievement of others – and sang with enthusiasm.
- Pupils have a reasonable understanding of what bullying is and the different forms it can take, including name-calling, physical bullying and cyber bullying. They know what to do should bullying occur. Pupils told inspectors that there was very little bullying in the school. They were also sure that any problems with bullying would soon be sorted out by the staff.
- Attendance has improved and most pupils attend regularly. The school intends to improve attendance further, shown by its immediate intention to appoint a Children's Support Worker whose role will include promoting good attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- Under the leadership and direction of the headteacher, the school has made considerable improvements. Her ambition, commitment and drive for improvement are shared by other leaders and staff.
 - Teamwork among the staff is strong, and all staff who returned the questionnaire were very positive about the school. They are proud to be part of the school, have confidence in the leadership and recognise the improvements made to pupils' achievement and to teaching. They state that pupils are safe and well behaved. These positive comments reflect the inspection findings.
 - Since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement and teaching have improved from satisfactory to good. The school has, therefore, demonstrated how capable it is of getting even better.
 - The school's performance and work is systematically and thoroughly checked. As a result, senior leaders and governors have a clear overview of the school's strengths and improvement points. The planning and actions taken to bring about improvements have been successful.
 - The local authority provides effective support and has a clear overview of how well the school is doing.
 - Considerable emphasis is placed on developing teaching and learning. Senior leaders observe classroom practice and provide constructive feedback to teachers. Procedures for the judging staff performance are well developed. Targets set to help staff improve their practice are well linked to pupils' progress and to the school's improvement priorities. Good-quality training and support have contributed to the improved teaching.
 - Decisions about staff promotion and salary increases are closely linked to a teacher's responsibilities and performance.
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- The development of an interesting range of subject learning has contributed to pupils' improved achievement. A range of interesting topics or themes promote good achievement and enjoyment for pupils. There are helpful links between subjects which add meaning and relevance to learning.
 - Discrimination in any form is not tolerated in the school. All groups of pupils have full access to the learning opportunities provided.
 - Pupil premium funding has been well planned and allocated. Additional support has been provided. One-to-one tuition is provided to help eligible pupils who are at risk of falling behind in literacy. Breakfast is provided to help these pupils get off to a good start to the school day.
 - The responses to Parent View and the school's own survey show that the vast majority of parents are pleased with the education and care provided. Many parents support their children's learning well. For example, during the holidays, pupils and parents worked successfully together to create 'story boxes'. These resulted in impressive three-dimensional models from reclaimed materials of a story or traditional tale, and did much to advance pupils' learning and self-confidence.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body are enthusiastic, supportive and effective. They have a good understanding of the school's performance and how it has improved. Governors have a clear overview of pupils' attainment and progress and how these compare to schools nationally. They also have an accurate understanding of teaching quality. Their understanding of the school's performance enables them to hold it to account by asking challenging questions of the leaders. Governors understand recent requirements relating to management of staff performance and are insistent that pay and promotion are linked to the progress pupils make. They check how the pupil premium funding is spent and the impact the actions have on pupils' achievement. Consequently, these pupils achieve well. The governors make sure that all safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	114705
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	401458

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	303
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Fisher
Headteacher	Jacqueline Moore
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2010
Telephone number	01206 578080
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