

St George's Catholic Primary School

Woodcock Road, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 9EZ.

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement is not yet good because the recent improvements in the teaching have not had sufficient time to accelerate progress so that it is consistently good across the school.
- Until recently leaders did not track the progress pupils make closely enough to identify and tackle any underachievement.
- Occasionally, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons and do not plan to extend pupils' thinking throughout lessons.
- Teachers do not always make clear to pupils the exact steps that they need to take to be successful in lessons; as a result this slows their progress.
- Improvement plans do not have precise enough targets and timescales for raising attainment and accelerating progress.
- Middle leaders have not evaluated their work extensively enough to know how effective they have been in improving pupils' achievement.
- Governors have not challenged the school's leaders strongly enough about why some pupils do not make better progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has galvanised the staff team to make the necessary improvements and has taken effective steps to tackle weaker teaching.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with a good start to their education.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Typically, pupils are polite, considerate and display good levels of maturity.
- The curriculum provides pupils with interesting activities that invigorate lessons, and strong links help them to apply their skills in literacy and numeracy to other subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons of which three were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made some short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the governors, the headteacher, and the school's senior staff. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 24 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) as well as consulting informally with parents and carers before school.
- She observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents including the school's improvement plans, information on pupils' current progress, planning, minutes of the governing body meetings and records relating to special educational needs, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspector heard pupils read, talked to them in lessons and evaluated samples of their work.

Inspection team

Sandra Woodman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding from the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is just below average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The school has larger proportion of pupils moving into and out of the school than is usually found.
- The school is emerging from a period of turbulence in its leadership and staffing. The current headteacher took up her substantive post in January 2012.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen teaching so that all pupils make good progress by:
 - making sure teachers always have high expectations and maintain a brisk pace in lessons
 - planning lessons more thoroughly so that learning is effective in all parts of the lesson
 - ensuring that teachers provide pupils with the steps to be successful in lessons.
- Improve the school leaders' effectiveness by:
 - sharpening improvement plans so that they have specific targets for achievement and tighter timescales for completion in order than they can monitored more closely
 - providing training and professional development for middle leaders in checking and evaluating their areas of responsibility
 - extending the governing body's understanding of national assessment data so that the governors can challenge the school more robustly.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because progress is not consistently good and attainment has remained broadly average. Taking account of mobility levels in some cohorts, progress across year groups has not been strong enough, especially where there has been weaker teaching. Progress is strongest in Years 2, 3 and 6, with the weakest in Year 5.
- In 2012 the attainment of Year 6 pupils rose just above the national average in English, but remained below in mathematics. Progress for these pupils was as expected in English, but below in mathematics, and not enough pupils made good progress from their starting points. However, improvements to the quality of teaching are starting to show impact, particularly on progress in mathematics.
- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the school with the expected skills for their age and make good gains in all aspects of their learning due to the clearly focused provision. Early writing skills are well developed and children demonstrate their ability at every opportunity.
- Closer tracking of progress is ensuring that any underachievement is identified and addressed promptly. Increasingly, teachers are more responsive to the needs of their pupils, providing support to close any gaps in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are receiving better help so that their progress is in line with their classmates and sometimes above.
- Average point scores show that pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those eligible for free school meals and those from service families, attain below their peers in English and in mathematics. The school is taking steps to ensure that all pupils are given an equal opportunity to succeed. Consequently, the funding has been allocated to support programmes which are showing good impact, especially in mathematics.
- The school was below the national average in the national Year 1 screening check for phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), but has taken decisive steps to address this. The more systematic teaching of phonics is ensuring that pupils are making faster gains in their skills. Younger pupils read extensively, and with obvious enjoyment, while the older ones are enthused by the range of new authors that have been introduced.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over time, teaching requires improvement as pupils' progress is not consistent. There is evidence that teaching is getting better and this was confirmed by observations during the inspection. Whilst weaker teaching has been addressed, some inconsistencies remain. Sometimes teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve so that pupils' thinking is not extended throughout the lesson and teachers do not provide clear steps for success, which slows progress.
- Where teaching is consistently good, such as in Year 6, the pace of learning is brisk because pupils are clear about what they need to accomplish, their thinking is developed well and not a moment is lost.
- Regular assessment and better use of progress information are helping teachers to provide improved support for pupils, especially in mathematics. Marking provides pupils with helpful comments about how to improve their work and this is most effective when teachers allow sufficient time for pupils to respond.
- New initiatives, such as Big Maths Beat That to strengthen numeracy skills, are motivating pupils to reach higher levels of attainment. In one strong mathematics lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 engaged in impressive dialogue when teaching each other methods for converting fractions. As a result of clear guidance from the teacher, they were able to describe their methods succinctly, deepening their own understanding in the process.
- The pupil premium has been used to provide small-group teaching and some specific individual

support to help close gaps in pupils' achievement and raise their self-esteem. Some effective provision in mathematics is showing a marked impact in their progress and confidence as mathematicians. Good links with home have enabled parents and carers to be more involved in their children's learning.

- Teaching assistants give effective support to those pupils with special educational needs, and those new to the school and this country requiring specific support, so that their progress is improving in line with their classmates and is sometimes better.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Typically, pupils are courteous, friendly and display impressive levels of maturity in and around the school. They say that the way the school encourages them to achieve and celebrates success is helping to motivate them to try even harder. Behaviour is not yet outstanding as occasionally pupils' thinking is not fully extended in lessons and the pupils lose concentration.
- Pupils, their parents, carers and the staff are positive about standards of behaviour. Pupils report that bullying is rare but where any concerns arise, adults sort it out effectively. They have a good understanding of the various forms that bullying can take, such as cyber bullying and homophobic bullying, and are adamant that no discrimination is tolerated at their school.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school because the adults take steps to ensure they are well looked after. They are encouraged to help maintain a secure environment as members of the 'safety patrol'.
- Behaviour is managed consistently well by teachers, with a good balance of rewards and sanctions appropriate to pupils' ages. Warm relationships help to make the school a harmonious place where all pupils feel valued.
- Pupils attend regularly and are generally punctual. They are given a wide range of roles and responsibilities in school, such as managing a budget for playground equipment and leading the acts of worship. These opportunities have enabled them to develop their personal skills, such as leadership, effectively so that they make a good contribution to the school community.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Although the leadership of the headteacher is strong, middle leaders are not yet sufficiently skilled or rigorous enough in their monitoring to judge how well improvements are working. Steps taken to address weaker teaching have been effective but improvements are only just starting to accelerate progress.
- School leaders are not accurate enough in their assessment of the impact of new initiatives because improvement plans lack specific targets for pupils' achievement and do not have precise timescales.
- The new headteacher has brought stability to the school and quickly gained the confidence of the whole community. She has galvanised the staff and renewed their sense of purpose so that there is high morale and a good team spirit.
- The local authority has provided some effective support for the school's leaders in improving the system for tracking progress, supporting the subject leader to make improvements in mathematics and strengthening safeguarding arrangements.
- In the past there have not been clear enough links between the way teachers were rewarded and the progress pupils make. The headteacher is strengthening the way the performance of teachers is managed, linked to the new national Teachers' Standards so that any underperformance is addressed more quickly. Pay progression is related to the achievement of pupils and the wider impact more experienced teachers have across the school.
- The rich curriculum ensures that pupils find activities interesting and enjoyable, especially the new initiatives in mathematics and the opportunities to write more extensively across other subjects. The way the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, encouraging pupils to be reflective and responsible members of the school community.

■ All statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils are met because the school ensures that the arrangements for child protection are thorough and that staff receive regular training.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– Due to the period of disrupted leadership, governors have not had sufficient quality of information enabling them to provide challenge about why pupils' progress is not yet good. They have not gained an accurate view of the school's performance, particularly in relation to other schools nationally. However this is improving under the new headteacher and they have better insight into pupils' achievement with more regular updates on progress. Increasingly they are involved in monitoring activities and it would aid their checks if improvement plans included more precise targets and timescales. Governors have a clear understanding of the new arrangements for managing the performance of teachers and the link to pay progression. Financial management is secure and governors know how the pupil premium has been allocated and is being used effectively to support pupils, both academically and in their personal development.

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	126481
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	402401

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	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Bennett
Headteacher	Louise Croker
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 November 2009
Telephone number	01985 218284
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