

St George's CofE Primary School

The Hoskars, Westhoughton, Bolton, BL5 2FB

Inspection dates

26–27 September 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.

- The progress made in learning by all pupils in all key stages and by all pupil groups is good.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding.
- Relationships are very positive in the school which provides a happy, secure place for pupils to learn where pupils feel safe and well cared for by all adults.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is consistently good. They are keen to learn and work together very well. This enables the lessons to run smoothly without disruption allowing good learning to take place.
- A rich, broad and exciting curriculum provides the pupils with learning opportunities which motivate them as learners and enable them to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills in different subjects.
- School leaders, led by the newly appointed headteacher, have a strong desire to bring about continuous improvement in teaching and learning. They know where the school needs to go and how to get it there. The staff of the school are fully behind the leadership and are equally committed to achieving these shared goals. This is now a strength of the school.
- The governing body is well-informed about the school and supportive of its work. It monitors the school's work carefully, provides real challenge and holds the school robustly to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is yet outstanding.
- Outdoor provision in the Early Years does not provide enough opportunities for the children to develop their independent skills.
- Marking is not consistent and does not consistently reflect the best practice in the school.
- The work set in lessons does not always enable pupils to learn as well as they can, whatever their ability.
- Middle and subject leaders do not play a sufficiently active role in the raising of standards in their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons delivered by 12 teachers including a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made a few short visits to observe pupils in small group intervention sessions and also heard some pupils read. An infant assembly and some class collective worships were also observed.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, staff, representatives of the governing body, a group of twelve parents, a local authority representative and two groups of pupils. Inspectors also talked to pupils on the playground.
- The inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documents including: the school's own information about pupils' progress; planning; the monitoring of learning and teacher performance; organisation of the curriculum; safeguarding information; and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors also took account of 60 responses to the on-line survey (Parent View), five letters delivered to the school, a telephone call with a parent and also 14 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Peter Martin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Dave Blackburn

Additional Inspector

Pamela Davenport

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an above average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average. (This is additional funding provided by the government for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after).
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is lower than that found in most schools. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who are learning English as an additional language, is well below that found nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - making marking more consistent, matching the best practice in the school, by ensuring that it is linked more closely to pupils' learning targets
 - giving the time and opportunity for pupils to respond to the marking and amend and improve their work
 - ensuring that the learning needs of all pupils, particularly the more able, are met by providing work which matches their level of ability and is sufficiently challenging
 - making sure teachers check more regularly on pupils' understanding during lessons so teaching can be modified where necessary so all pupils learn well
 - providing more opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor provision for pupils to work independently and develop their mathematical and language skills.
- Strengthen the leadership of the school by developing the role of middle and subject leaders in the monitoring and evaluation of their subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils make good progress overall. The majority of pupils enter the nursery with skills that are broadly typical for their age and leave at the end of Key Stage 2 with attainment that is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who make the expected progress in Key Stage 2 is higher than the national average in reading and writing and broadly equal to the national average in mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils who make better progress than this is higher than the national average in all three subjects.
- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They settle in quickly and make good steady progress. A large majority of them enter Key Stage 1 with skills typical for their age and the majority of them show a good level of development and are ready for the next stage in their education.
- Very good progress continues in Key Stage 1 and pupils enter Key Stage 2 with levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics which are well above national averages. This good progress has been sustained for the past three years and more.
- The teaching of phonics (linking letters with the sounds they make) is very effective. The proportion of pupils achieving the standard set by the government in the annual reading check in Year 1 was well above the national average in 2012 and increased by a further 14 percentage points in 2013.
- In 2012, there was a dip in standards in Key Stage 2, particularly in reading and in the progress made by girls, pupils with educational special needs and pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. These issues were addressed by the school leadership and through carefully planned procedures and well-targeted support standards in 2013 are now the highest the school has had in the last five years and are well above the national averages recorded in 2012 for all ability groups.
- Pupil progress throughout Key Stage 2 is now consistently good in all year groups. The progress of pupils who have a special educational need or disability is as good as that of other pupils in the school and some have made outstanding progress.
- Most dramatic has been the improvement in the progress made by pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding. The effective use of pupil premium funding to provide carefully targeted support has resulted in these pupils attaining as well as other pupils in the school and in some cases better and better than similar pupils nationally. These pupils are making good progress in all year groups.
- Pupils read daily in school and are encouraged to read widely. Consequently, the attainment in reading has risen rapidly in the last year and the standards in reading are above the national average.
- The school's commitment to equal opportunities for all its pupils is shown by the high level of pupil attendance, the appointment of a learning mentor to support pupils whose circumstances put them at risk, and the good progress being made by of all its pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- Lessons observed during the inspection were consistently good with some which were outstanding. This matches the school's own assessment of teaching and also that of the local authority. Work in the pupils' books showed good progress being made by pupils and good teaching throughout the year.
- Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and pupils say that they enjoy them and are well supported by their teachers. They are very happy to talk about their learning and their achievements. For example, a group of upper juniors spoke enthusiastically and with real pride about an e-book the previous Year 6 had created together, 'Unforgiving Tales', which is now commercially available.

- Teaching is good because teachers consistently set high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. Lessons have clear learning goals and 'steps to success' which ensure that the pupils know what they are going to learn and how to assess for themselves how well they are doing.
- Pupils are keen to learn and lessons run smoothly with little disruption to learning. Positive relationships between pupils and adults are a strong feature in all lessons and indeed in all aspects of school life. Teachers respect their pupils and value the contributions and effort they make.
- In the very best lessons, the work set for pupils is challenging and allows them to use their own initiative and make decisions. For example, in an outstanding lesson in Year 6, the pupils had to calculate a budget for the upkeep of a pet dog. They had to generate their own questions to solve the task and then research their answers using a range of sources including the Internet.
- Where the teaching was less effective the work set by teachers does not help pupils to learn well, whatever their ability. Also, on occasions, teachers do not check on pupils' understanding early enough in lessons to enable them to modify their teaching if required.
- The standard of marking is good across the whole school. Pupils' work is assessed routinely and pupils are told what they must do next to improve. In the very best practice, marking is closely linked to the pupils' learning targets and pupils are given the opportunity to respond to the marking and time to improve their work, but this is not always the case.
- The teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Well-planned activities and well-structured indoor learning activities ensure that children make good progress and develop their confidence. However, sometimes children are not given sufficient opportunities to explore and find out things for themselves and opportunities to use the outdoor area to develop the children's independence and their language and mathematical development are missed.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively and make a big contribution to the learning of pupils.
- The teaching of phonics (linking letters to their sounds) is very good. The school introduced new materials and games to support previous good attainment and as a result, standards have improved further and are well above national averages.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are happy at the school. They feel safe and well cared for by all adults. They say that bullying does not happen often but when it does it is always dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Good systems at the beginning of the day ensure that the school gets off to a prompt and calm start to the day. Well-established rewards systems are in place in the school to encourage good behaviour and effort such as 'star of the week' and golden time.
- Pupils generally behave very well in all areas of the school. They are cheerful, polite and friendly and show good manners. They co-operate happily with adults and each other. Good facilities such as fenced-off areas for football and a good selection of play equipment ensure that playtimes are happy occasions where pupils are well-occupied and have good opportunities to develop their social skills.
- Behaviour in lessons is consistently good allowing them to proceed smoothly and pupils to make good progress. Pupils work well together and show respect for each other's views and ideas. The very little minor misbehaviour observed was usually the result of tasks not being set at the appropriate level of challenge for some groups of pupils which led to them becoming less interested in the work.
- There is a minority of pupils who present the school with challenging behaviour. However, the school manages this behaviour skilfully and promptly with little disruption to other pupils' learning. The employment of a learning mentor is helping these pupils to learn to manage their own behaviour and ensure that their education is also disrupted as little as possible.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They are fully aware of the different types of bullying including, for example, cyber-bullying. They know who they can go to if they are bullied and are confident that they will be listened to and helped.
- Parents were unanimous in saying their children were safe at school. The large majority said they were happy, were well looked after and made good progress. A minority of parents expressed

some concerns with how well the school dealt with bullying and about how well the school kept them informed about their child's progress but the majority of parents spoke very positively about the school's work. Several expressed views such as 'My child doesn't even want to stay off when they are sick.'

- Attendance at the school is excellent. The school works very hard to promote good attendance and consequently it is well above the national average. Also, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is well below the national average. This commitment by the school and the excellent support of parents ensures that disruption to the pupils' learning is kept to a minimum.

The leadership and management are good

- The leadership provided by the acting headteacher, supported by the consultant head, ensured that areas of underachievement were addressed and improvements made. With the appointment of a new headteacher in September, the school now has a strong leadership team which is committed to continuous school improvement. They know what is needed for the school to be successful, how to bring this about and have the drive and determination to ensure that it happens.
- The majority of parents expressed very positive views about the school leadership and many commented positively on the 'visibility' and approachability of the new headteacher.
- The school staff are also highly positive about the school leadership and fully committed to the direction the school is going. This unity of purpose is a real strength of the school.
- Robust arrangements for the checking on the quality of teaching and teachers' performance are in place. Regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching, supported by well-targeted further training, are ensuring a continuously improving picture. Teachers are keen to acquire new skills and develop their personal expertise and feel well-supported by the school leadership.
- Pupils are assessed regularly and their progress is carefully tracked to identify at an early stage any pupils who may be falling behind. Regular pupil progress meetings are held and carefully targeted additional support is then planned to help these pupils catch up. Consequently, all pupil groups, in all classes, are making good progress.
- School leaders use end of key stage data and the school's own information about pupil progress to evaluate effectively and accurately the school's performance and set new targets for school improvement. These targets are clearly set out in a detailed school improvement plan which has clear actions and success criteria enabling school leaders and governors to check on progress.
- Systems are in place to enable subject leaders in the school to play a meaningful role in the checking of standards in their subjects. However, these are at an early stage of development and there has not been sufficient time to show the impact on pupil learning.
- The school provides a rich and varied curriculum which stimulates pupil interests and enables them to practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects. It contributes much to the development of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by providing a wide range of musical and artistic opportunities, studies about other cultures and religions and the development of social skills.
- Excellent use has been made of the additional funding given to the school to enhance sports provision. It has been used to increase the scope of sports activities available to pupils during and after school, provide pupils with the opportunity to be coached by sports specialists and training to develop the teachers' expertise. A wide range of sporting opportunities are available to pupils after school that are well-attended and contribute much to pupils' health and well-being.
- The local authority has provided effective support for the acting leadership in the raising of standards of teaching and learning. It is now providing light touch support for this good school.
- The school meets all statutory requirements for the safeguarding of pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is highly committed and very well informed about the school. Governors have steered the school through some difficult times and have ensured that the school has been challenged and held to account in all key areas of its work during that time. They monitor

teacher performance and pupils' progress, playing particular attention to the progress made by pupils who have been eligible for pupil premium funding. They are fully aware of the priorities for school improvement and monitor progress against the school improvement plan throughout the year. They continuously seek to further their own expertise by additional training to make them increasingly effective in their role. School finances are managed efficiently.

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	131038
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	426165

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Denise Dean
Headteacher	Jacqueline Gilbert
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2011
Telephone number	01942 813069
Fax number	01942 818600
Email address	office@st-georges.bolton.sch.uk

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