

St George's CofE Primary School

Concord Place, Salford, Greater Manchester, M6 6SU

Inspection dates 20–21 November 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

- Pupils do not make consistently good progress. While most pupils make the progress expected, not enough of them make more rapid progress, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is not consistently good. The work set for pupils does not consistently provide the appropriate level of challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able.
- Teachers do not always do enough to check pupils' understanding in lessons, and marking does not always tell pupils how to improve their work.
- Pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to write at length and to apply their mathematical skills to real life situations.
- Subject leaders do not have the opportunity to make rigorous checks on pupils' progress in subjects other than mathematics and English.
- The governing body is over-reliant on the information provided by the headteacher. It is not rigorous enough in holding the school to account for the quality of teaching, pupils' progress and the impact of additional funding such as pupil premium.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders, led by a very effective executive headteacher, have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and what it needs to do to improve. They have taken effective steps to improve the quality of teaching which are now starting to be reflected in improvements to achievement.
- The pastoral care of the pupils is excellent. The school provides excellent support, particularly for pupils and families whose circumstances make them vulnerable. As a result, these pupils attend school regularly and feel secure and well cared for.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 17 lessons delivered by 10 teachers including a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors heard some pupils read and examined pupils' work in their books. An inspector also carried out short visits to classrooms to gather information about the wider curriculum.
- The team held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, staff, representatives of the governing body, a group of parents and one parent who requested the opportunity to speak with the lead inspector, and a local authority representative. Inspectors also met with a group of pupils and talked to pupils during lessons and 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 were unable to take account of responses to the online survey (Parent View) as there were not enough of them for them to be made available. Account was taken of 18 responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Peter Martin, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Lawrence

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a below average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is higher than that found in most schools. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the average seen nationally and these pupils form the majority of the school roll. Pupil premium is the 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.
- Although the majority of pupils are White British, a significant proportion are from any other White heritages. The proportion of pupils who are learning English as an additional language is below the national average.
- There have been significant changes to staffing since the previous inspection. The previous headteacher resigned her post and an executive headteacher was appointed in September 2012. The deputy headteacher has taken on a non-teaching role since September 2013 and leads the school when the executive headteacher is at her other school. Three new teachers have been recruited since September 2012.
- 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 it is at least good and more is outstanding so that a higher proportion of pupils make more than expected progress by:
 - ensuring that learning activities closely match the abilities of all pupils, including the more able, and provide an appropriate level of challenge that enables pupils to learn quickly
 - ensuring that marking clearly indicates to pupils what they must do to improve their work and that they are routinely given time to respond to the teachers' comments
 - ensuring teachers consistently check pupils' understanding early in lessons to enable them to modify their teaching if required in order to meet learning needs
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their extended writing
 - providing ample opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to real-life and problem-solving situations.
- To further strengthen the leadership and management of the school including governance by:
 - developing the subject leaders' roles in subjects other than English and mathematics to enable them to more effectively monitor the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility
 - ensuring governors access further training to enable them to hold the school to account more rigorously for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, including the monitoring of the use and impact of pupil premium funding.

An external review of governance, to include a specific focus on the school's use of the pupil premium, should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Although achievement requires improvement because of inconsistencies between rates of progress in different classes, pupils' progress is starting to quicken because of improvements in the quality of teaching.
- The proportion of pupils that made expected progress by the end of Key Stage 2 has improved over the last two years and is above the national average in reading and writing and in line for mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils making more than expected progress is still below that seen nationally, particularly in writing.
- Despite the improving rate of progress, in 2013, pupils' attainment was below average in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school's data and other inspection evidence show that progress in reading is accelerating and, in the last year, rapid progress was made in most classes. However, progress in writing and mathematics is inconsistent. Work in pupils' books also confirms that progress varies from class to class.
- Children enter the Nursery with skills and knowledge which are below those typical for their age, and sometimes well below. They settle in quickly in the Nursery and this well-organised setting enables them to feel secure and they soon begin to develop their confidence and independence. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and by the end of their Reception class Year have acquired skills and knowledge which are broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding forms the large majority of pupils in all cohorts. The additional pupil premium funding has been used to recruit additional staff to enable pupils to be in smaller classes; to avoid the need to have mixed-age groups; and to provide additional support for those pupils who are falling behind. As a consequence, the pupil premium pupils are attaining as well as other pupils in the school in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs are carefully tracked, and well-targeted support is ensuring that they are making more than expected progress in most cohorts in reading and writing, and expected progress overall in mathematics. Pupils for whom English is an additional language generally make good progress.
- The school has revised its approach to the teaching of phonics (the linking of letters to their sounds) and, as a result, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 in 2013 more than doubled. Nevertheless, it remains below the national average. However, the proportion achieving the standard by the end of Year 2 is above the national average.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time requires improvement. While much of the teaching observed during the inspection was good, a significant proportion required improvement.
- While teachers are employing an increasing range of teaching methods to gain pupils' interest, these methods are used more effectively in some lessons than others. As a result, the rate of progress varies between different classes.
- Where teaching is less effective, activities do not fully match the different abilities of the pupils and do not provide the appropriate level of challenge, particularly for the more able. In a mathematics class, for example, pupils were engaged in a game where they were identifying shapes from their properties. All the pupils were given the same shapes to consider and the activity did not stretch the more able; consequently, they did not make good progress in this lesson.
- The range of strategies used to check pupils' understanding is relatively narrow and teachers are over-dependent on asking questions of individual pupils. They also sometimes miss opportunities

to check on the understanding of all pupils early in the lesson to enable them to modify their teaching if necessary. In other lessons, pupils are not given enough opportunities to get on with their work independently.

- Some opportunities are provided for pupils to apply their writing skills in other subjects. For example, in a good lesson in Year 2, pupils were highly engaged in writing about the 'Great Fire of London' and produced good quality writing. However, these opportunities, including for extended writing, are not frequent enough. There are even fewer opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills in a range of contexts. Consequently, pupils' ability to apply their mathematical skills to real-life or problem-solving situations is underdeveloped.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in quality. It tells pupils what they have done well and gives some advice about they need to do next to improve their work but, in some instances, these next steps are not clear enough to help pupils move forward with their learning. In addition, pupils are not routinely given the opportunity to reflect on teachers' guidance and make the necessary improvements to their work.
- Where teaching is at its best, skilful questioning challenges pupils to think and tests their depth of understanding. Good subject knowledge on the part of the teacher is evident and strong links to previous learning are exploited. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils learn quickly. There is a good balance between teacher-led activities and opportunities for pupils to work by themselves and pupils are given the opportunity to consider how much they have learned during the lesson. This encourages a sense of achievement and enables pupils to develop an understanding of the progress they have made.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well and have a positive impact upon the learning of the pupils, particularly those who need additional support, for example pupils who have disabilities or special educational needs.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Relationships are a strength of the school. The school's strong commitment to equal opportunities is evidenced by the strong support it provides to its vulnerable pupils and families. This ensures that pupils attend school as much as possible and are well supported when in school.
- Attendance has improved strongly over the last three years and is currently above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school has also reduced markedly and is presently below the national average. This is a direct consequence of the actions taken by the school.
- Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is generally good. Pupils are friendly and polite when spoken to and happy to help when asked. Teachers model good behaviour and manners towards their pupils and, in return, their high expectations are met by pupils who are eager to please.
- Teachers take every opportunity to praise pupils when they show good behaviour. As a consequence, behaviour in lessons is generally good and only on occasions when the work is not matched to pupils' abilities well enough do pupils grow restless or lose concentration.
- The school's management of behaviour is good. Incidents of misbehaviour are rare and, when they do occur, are effectively dealt with and actions carefully recorded. There are some pupils who find it difficult to settle to learning. These pupils are managed very skilfully by teachers and support staff ensuring that any disruption to their learning and that of others is minimised.
- Parents and pupils agree that they are kept safe and are well cared for by all the adults in the school. Parents say that their children enjoy coming to school. As one parent said, 'My boy cries when he's on holiday'. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and how to respect and look after themselves and each other. Procedures for safeguarding and child protection are excellent.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and are adamant that there is no bullying in their school. They acknowledge that there are instances of falling out but are confident that these are always dealt with quickly and effectively by the adults in the school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although the school has developed since its previous inspection, the pace of improvement has been relatively slow. Since the arrival of the new headteacher the pace of improvement has picked up considerably. This is because there has been a clear focus on improving the quality of teaching and more effective use of the school's tracking system to spot and address any underachievement.
- Leaders' analysis of how well the school is performing is sometimes a little over-optimistic. However, they are effective in identifying exactly what they need to do move the school on.
- School leaders have placed a strong emphasis on improving teaching in order to raise achievement. A robust system for checking on teachers' performance has been in place since September 2012 and is clearly linked to pay progression. Teachers are set robust targets for pupils' progress and for school improvement. Although this has led to accelerated progress in some year groups and some subjects, it is still not consistent across the school.
- The actions of leaders responsible for the coordination of English and mathematics are leading to improvements in pupils' progress, particularly in reading. However, teachers who have taken on the responsibility of leading in other subjects are at an early stage in this role, especially in the effective checking on the provision and pupils' outcomes.
- The curriculum requires improvement because it does not meet the needs of all groups of pupils. Literacy and numeracy are not consistently promoted across all subjects. Good use is made of information and communication technology to capture pupils' interest and contribute to their enjoyment of learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is an integral part of school life. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures and are given opportunities to reflect and pray. The school choir is a strong feature of the school.
- The school aims to provide equality of opportunity, but the varying rates of progress show that their actions are not yet fully effective.
- The executive headteacher, supported by senior leaders, has high ambitions for the school and provides a strong sense of direction of where the school needs to go and has the drive and determination to get it there. Parents, governors and the local authority all recognise the huge improvements made since the appointment of the current headteacher.
- A good system for monitoring pupils' progress is also in place which enables the school to identify which pupils are doing well and those who are falling behind. School leaders are using this information effectively to target additional support and to help these pupils learn more quickly.
- The additional funding for sports has been used to secure the services of an expert sports teacher who provides the pupils with quality coaching and is helping the teachers to develop the physical education curriculum. Funding is also being used to extend pupils' opportunities for participating in competitive sport. This is contributing to pupils' enjoyment of school and their general well-being.
- **The governance of the school:**

The governors are highly committed to the pursuit of school improvement and have not been afraid to make hard decisions when needed. Since the appointment of the executive headteacher they now feel much better informed about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. However, although these issues are fully reported and discussed in meetings, governors acknowledge that they are over-reliant on the information provided by the headteacher. This is because of their limited understanding of school data and how to use it to judge the impact of teaching. There is still a lack of rigour in their scrutiny of how the school uses additional funding such as pupil premium and sports funding and in the monitoring of its impact. Governors accept that they would benefit from training to enable them to carry out their duties more effectively.

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	105932
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	426100

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

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	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rowena Platt
Headteacher	Jane Tyers
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2012
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