

St George's Primary School

St George's Road, Wallasey, Merseyside, CH45 3NF

Inspection dates 29–30 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- By the end of Key Stage 2 the attainment of pupils in English and mathematics is well above the national average.
- Pupils are making better progress than in the past. Progress is now good across both key stages in all subjects.
- Well-directed support enables disabled pupils and those with special educational needs to achieve well.
- The progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is similar to that of other pupils in school.
- Teaching is good overall and outstanding in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the next steps in their learning as a result of high-quality marking.
- Pupils take great care to produce work which is neat and well organised.
- The standard of homework is outstanding and contributes much to the present levels of achievement.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and proud of their school.
- The curriculum is well planned and provides pupils with many opportunities to improve their writing.
- Leadership is strong at all levels and the well-informed governors challenge senior leaders to continually improve.
- This is an improving school. School leaders are rigorous in their approach to checking the quality of teaching to bring about improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4.
- With the exception of Year 6 there are times in mathematics when the most able pupils listen to explanations which they already understand and are set work which is too easy.
- In a small number of lessons, children in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are noisy and this prevents everybody from making as much progress as they could.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 44 lessons and parts of lessons taught by 29 teachers. An observation was undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' exercise books.
- Discussions were held with representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, senior leaders, and managers responsible for leading specific subjects and other staff and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the school's documentation to help gain an accurate view of its performance, safeguarding policies, the school development plan, governing body minutes, behavioural records and displays around the school.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of information on how the school checks the progress of the different pupil groups.
- Inspectors took account of the 83 responses on Parent View (the online questionnaire). Inspectors had conversations with parents in the playground.
- Inspectors analysed 29 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Des Stubbs, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elaine White

Additional Inspector

Marilyn Massey

Additional Inspector

Michael Blaylock

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Year 5 and 6 classrooms are situated on a separate site 500m from the main school.
- The school trains associate teachers in its role as a 'Schools Direct' hub school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement further by ensuring that:
 - the outstanding practice in Years 5 and 6 is shared across the school
 - in mathematics the most able pupils do not spend time listening to explanations which they already understand, and that they are not given work which is too easy for them
 - children in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 lessons are set work that engages them so they do not disrupt learning by being too noisy.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils at St. George's are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Attainment is much higher than the national average in all subjects. Inspectors saw Year 6 pupils who read fluently, wrote lively and interesting pieces engaging the reader and were able to solve complex mathematical problems. These pupils love their learning and talk with great enthusiasm about the challenges teachers provide them.
- For the past few years the progress pupils have made in Key Stage 2 has not been good enough but this is no longer the case and the progress made by all pupil groups from their different starting points is now at least good. School leaders ensure the school promotes equality of opportunity by continually checking the progress every pupil makes. Parents agree that their children make good progress.
- The majority of children enter school with skills, knowledge and understanding which are typical for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and quickly acquire a love of books and thoroughly enjoy writing, for example a letter to the giant in Jack and the Beanstalk.
- At Key Stage 1 the attainment of pupils is in line with the national average. Standards in reading are rising rapidly as a result of a more consistent approach to the teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds). A much higher proportion of pupils are now on track to achieve well in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Evidence provided by the school shows that pupils in Key Stage 1 are now making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding make progress similar to other pupils. Their attainment is about a term behind other pupils in English and about two terms behind in mathematics. The difference in attainment between pupils eligible for a free school meal and other pupils is less than is found nationally.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good as a result of well-targeted support. These pupils make good progress from their starting points and they reach standards that are above similar pupils nationally.
- Achievement observed in all lessons by inspectors was good and outstanding in Years 5 and 6. In English teachers have very high expectations of all pupils. In mathematics, however, the most able pupils at times have to listen to explanations that they already understand and are set work which is too easy for them. This is not the case in Year 6 where the most able pupils are challenged throughout the whole lesson to work at the highest level they are capable of.

The quality of teaching

is good

- During the inspection, teaching throughout the school was good and outstanding at Years 5 and 6. This concurs with the school's own checking of teaching and most parents also agree that their child is well taught.
- Teachers have received training and are working extremely hard to ensure that their questioning is appropriate and timely. As a result, inspectors found this to be a particular strength of teaching throughout the school. Teachers' questioning, in order to gauge what pupils understand and what next steps in learning they need during a lesson, is excellent.
- Teachers also skilfully use opportunities for pupils to work together to develop their ideas prior to writing, for example when sharing ideas that had been found from different historical sources about being a child in Victorian times. Pupils also develop their learning by asking other groups what they have discovered and then sharing it with their own group. This has led to a higher standard of work, in particular in writing.
- Exercise books show that teaching over time is consistently good and much is outstanding. All teachers' marking is consistently of a very high standard. Teachers provide pupils with precise instructions on how they can improve their work. Pupils have time to read their feedback and

they are very clear when explaining what they need to do to improve their work.

- Pupils take great care and pride in the way they present and organise their work and they are rightly proud when sharing their exercise books and topic books with visitors.
- Homework is set regularly and most parents agree that what their child receives is appropriate. Inspectors found the quality of homework to be outstanding. One pupil had written an enchanting story from the perspective of being a flower. This work was marked to a very high standard. Such practice is consistent throughout the school.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support learning, and children are encouraged to develop their concentration and listening skills.
- In a small number of lessons, children in both the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are noisy and this prevents everybody from making the progress they should. At these times, children are not fully involved in their learning because they are not always set work which they find interesting.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. School is a very calm and orderly place. Pupils are polite; they open doors for adults, care for their environment and enjoy the time that they spend in their garden and outside classroom.
- The school behaviour records show that behaviour around school, on the playground and in the dining hall is good and any incidents recorded are only ones of very low-level disruption. Behaviour at breakfast club and after-school club is also good. The majority of parents also agree that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils display a positive attitude towards their learning. They listen carefully, try their best and work well both on their own and with a partner. In the Year 5 and Year 6 building there is an atmosphere of serious study.
- Pupils cooperate well with each other during the times they get to discuss their work with their peers. This has a very good effect on their social and language development.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and that staff are approachable. Nearly all parents agree that their children are happy and safe at school. Incidents of bullying are rare.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying, understand how to stay safe in different situations and they are knowledgeable about internet safety.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent, however, is above the national average and the learning mentor is now taking steps to address this.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders at all levels have a clear vision for the school and all staff display a relentless determination to improve the learning experiences of pupils.
- In a short time, the headteacher has brought about significant improvements to the fabric of the building so that pupils and staff are now working in bright and modern classrooms. A gymnasium is also being built on the Year 5/6 site.
- New approaches to teaching introduced by the headteacher are now enabling pupils to make more rapid progress. In such a large school to achieve the consistency in practice seen by inspectors is a great credit to the leadership team.
- Middle leaders are very effective. They are all involved in the rigorous checking of teaching. They readily share their practice with colleagues. They have a sound knowledge of their subject areas and how teaching and learning can be improved further.
- Performance management is robust and closely linked to pupils' progress, the school's main priorities and the career stage of the teacher. Training and support are intensive and have had a

clear impact on the quality of teaching. Teachers have a personalised training programme and the extensive support and guidance provided by senior leaders are appreciated by teachers, especially those new to the profession.

- The curriculum is good with some outstanding elements. Much of the art work is of the highest quality, and the many opportunities for pupils to complete extended pieces of writing linked to the different themes is leading to more rapid progress in writing. Topic books which store the completed work are very impressive and pupils are rightly proud of these. The school is well prepared for the new National Curriculum in 2014.
- Good opportunities are provided within the curriculum for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The thematic topics also make a significant contribution. For example, linked to work on the Second World War, pupils wrote a letter to be sent to a parent in the event of a soldier's death.
- The primary school sport funding has been used effectively to improve the skills of teachers and pupils. There are increased opportunities to take part in sport clubs and to compete against other schools, which has led to greater participation. Equipment is also to be bought for the new gymnasium.
- St. George's trains associate teachers in its role as a 'Schools Direct' hub school. It works widely with other schools in the local area. One teacher successfully provides outreach support to local schools in developing creativity through literacy.
- The local authority provides the school with light-touch support.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have an excellent understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are very experienced, knowledgeable and receive appropriate training. They are well informed about the recent changes implemented to improve the quality of teaching; they have also received demonstrations from teachers about the new teaching ideas. The way in which governors challenge the headteacher is evident in the minutes of meetings which are on the school website. They understand that pay and promotion are linked to teachers' performance. They ensure efficient management of financial resources and have used the pupil premium funding effectively to make a significant impact on the attainment of eligible pupils.

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	104995
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	440712

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	833
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nick Holt
Headteacher	Gareth Elswood
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2011
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