

St George's Church of England Primary School

Coleman Road, Camberwell, London, SE5 7TF

Inspection dates 5–6 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 requires improvement because pupils do not make consistently good progress, and attainment overall remains below average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching has not been good enough across subjects or year groups to lead to pupils' good progress over time, especially for low attaining pupils. Some activities, including whole-class introductions, are too easy or difficult for some pupils, which reduces their progress.
- Some pupils struggle with their spelling because teachers do not show pupils how to develop and improve these skills sufficiently well.
- Leaders have not checked carefully enough how well all groups of pupils are learning. Their up-to-date knowledge of this is not strong enough to drive improvements in teaching and achievement.
- Governors have not had enough recent training to understand and fulfil all their current roles. They manage finances well and meet their duties for safeguarding. Their knowledge about how well different groups achieve is more limited. Consequently they do not support or challenge the school sufficiently or ensure that all groups are achieving sufficiently well.
- Teachers do not always make the best use of the teaching assistants' numerous skills; this slows the learning for some pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Most pupils get off to a good start in the Reception class and achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils enjoy school, are well behaved and try hard. Pupils are very polite, friendly and curious about life. They are eager to learn and attend well. Pupils feel safe in school.
- Achievement of more able pupils has improved, particularly in mathematics. In 2013, a high proportion of these pupils progressed well and a greater proportion reached the higher Level 5 in this subject.
- Leaders have already identified and are beginning to address most of the weaknesses highlighted in the inspection. Their actions are starting to have a positive impact and the school is moving forward.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, 17 lessons or part-lessons were observed, seven of them jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. Teachers of all seven classes were observed during the inspection.
- Discussions were held with parents, carers, pupils, governors, two representatives from the local authority, senior leaders and staff.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to report. Inspectors received the views of parents and carers through the 39 responses to a recent school questionnaire and informal discussions. This questionnaire had the same questions as the online Parent View questionnaire.
- The inspectors considered the views of staff through the 15 responses to the Ofsted inspection questionnaire and discussions.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's information on pupils' current progress, pupils' work, checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, local authority reports, documents relating to safeguarding and records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Jo Curd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Wolfson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than most other primary schools. It has one single-age class in each year group from Reception to Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is much higher than the national average. This is additional funding for specific groups of pupils, in this case, those who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action plus or with a statement is just above the national average. Some of these pupils have particularly complex and profound additional needs.
- All the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Almost half are of Black African descent and about 20% Black Caribbean descent. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is very high. A very few are at early stages of learning English.
- There have been changes in leadership since the previous inspection. One of the two assistant headteachers left the school in the summer term of 2013. The remaining assistant headteacher took up the new role of non-teaching deputy headteacher at the beginning of the autumn term of 2013.
- In 2013, the school met 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 achievement, especially of less able pupils and in mathematics and writing, is raised, by making sure that:
 - activities, including introductions to activities, get the most out of every pupil in the class in every lesson
 - teaching assistants are having a consistently positive impact on pupils' learning throughout each lesson
 - teachers provide sufficient guidance, especially on spellings, to help all pupils learn from their mistakes.
- Ensure that all school leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of teaching and the progress that all groups of pupils are making by making sure that:
 - leaders improve, check and keep orderly records on all aspects of the school, particularly teaching and achievement.
- Ensure that governors are sufficiently trained to fully understand and implement all their roles and responsibilities.

An external review of governance 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

- Progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, especially in 2013, was not fast enough for all groups of pupils, including those from the wide range of minority ethnic groups, to achieve well. Some groups of pupils, notably those who are less able and those who have English as an additional language, make less progress than others. This is because activities are sometimes too difficult and teaching assistants do not always have enough skill or knowledge to help them effectively. This reduces the school's drive for equal opportunities and means that some discrimination for these pupils remains.
- Children come into the Reception class with knowledge, skills and experience that are below national expectations for this age. Pupils make good progress due to effective teaching. However, the proportion of children who leave the Reception class with a good level of development is still below that seen in most other schools.
- The achievement of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is too variable across the school. They make more progress than other pupils in some classes and less in others. Overall, however, the gap in their attainment is not closing fast enough and by the end of Year 6, they are a term and a half behind others in reading, almost two terms behind in mathematics and three terms behind in writing.
- Too few high attaining pupils make fast enough progress in writing. Tasks are sometimes too easy and these pupils sometimes have to wait before they move on. This slows the progress of these pupils overall.
- Achievement in mathematics has improved, because teachers expect a lot from pupils and introduce lessons and activities in challenging, stimulating ways. These pupils enjoy the speedy pace of lessons and engage well with teachers' stimulating questions and explanations.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement. Pupils with the most complex difficulties make good progress because they have more individual support and their teaching assistants have often, but not always, had specific specialist training. Such training has included using alternative forms of communication and breaking tasks down into very simple steps. Those with less specific or complex needs make slower progress, because support is less effective and tasks are sometimes too difficult for them.
- Pupils read widely and often. A high proportion of pupils read frequently at home and those who do not are often heard at school. Achievement in phonics (the sound which letters make) is improving because many, but not all, staff have had training in this. The proportion of six-year-old pupils who do well in the phonics check rose considerably in 2013 and is now much closer to the national average.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it has not helped all groups of pupils achieve well, especially those who are less able. This is because activities, including whole-class introductions, are sometimes too difficult or easy for some pupils. For example, in a Key Stage 1 English lesson, all pupils except the very least able did the same task. Some pupils found this task difficult and made little progress, whereas some who were more able finished quickly and had to wait for others before moving on.
- Tasks are sometimes particularly difficult for less able pupils in writing and mathematics and this leads to some pupils becoming bored or frustrated. This is because teachers do not check carefully enough that pupils have a good grasp of basic skills, such as key concepts in mathematics and spellings in writing.

- Teaching assistants are not always trained or deployed sufficiently well to ensure that the achievement of all pupils is good. Some, particularly those who have been trained to support pupils with more complex disabilities, work effectively, skilfully and patiently with these pupils. On occasions, though, teachers do not make best use of them, especially at the beginning and end of lessons. When this happens, teaching assistants find themselves sitting idly by instead of taking an active part in the lesson.
- Whilst teachers can have high expectations of pupils' learning in lessons, some do not follow this through in their marking of pupils' work, so that pupils can learn from their mistakes. This is particularly true for spellings. A lot of pupils' writing is ticked without any reference to weak spellings. Consequently spelling does not improve sufficiently and by Year 6 spelling is weak.
- Although teaching requires improvement, a positive picture was seen during the inspection and learning was good in half of the lessons observed. Teachers prepare these lessons well, provide interesting activities and so help pupils enjoy their learning.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good, helping pupils to progress well. It is particularly positive when all the teaching assistants, guided well by the teacher, are deployed with small groups of children, working at levels appropriate to their development. For example, in one mathematics lesson, one teaching assistant worked with a small group of children who have complex learning difficulties, another helped some less able pupils, whilst the teacher taught more difficult concepts to children who are more able.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They continue to try hard, even when activities are too easy or difficult or when introductions or explanations go on for too long. Almost all the pupils stay focussed and continue to try hard, thus making the most of opportunities provided.
- Rare occasions of unacceptable behaviour, such as distractions at group times, are managed well. The few incidents of exclusion are very brief and generally successful, showing marked improvements over time.
- Behaviour at lunch and break times is excellent. During the inspection, pupils were fully absorbed with play equipment and dancing energetically with staff. Relationships are excellent, as pupils of all ages and all groups play extremely happily together with adults and with each other.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage behave well. They are keen to learn and form good relationships, playing and working happily together.
- Pupils enjoy and have fun at school. This helps relationships and their positive attitudes to learning. Attendance of all groups is above that in most other schools. Continued periods of absence are extremely rare.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils have very positive attitudes to faith. They have a good knowledge of Christianity and are interested in and respectful of a range of other faiths. They have a good sense of right and wrong and behave well. They are keen to raise money for charity and to help others around the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff know pupils and families well and follow up any concerns to make sure all pupils are safe. It is not outstanding because although leaders keep written records of any actions they take, these are sometimes kept in a range of places, making them slightly difficult to review.
- Staff give high priority to the welfare and well-being of pupils and families. The headteacher greets parents, carers and pupils in the playground most days and relationships are good. Almost all parents and carers spoken to in the inspection are positive about the safety and care of their children.
- Pupils have a good understanding of a range of bullying, including physical, verbal and cyber bullying. They have a mature attitude and are confident that any issues, which very occasionally arise, will be sorted out effectively and quickly.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because the actions they are taking to improve the teaching and achievement for all pupils have not yet had enough impact
- Leaders, including governors, have not always checked carefully enough how well different groups of pupils at the school are achieving. Although senior and middle leaders monitor lessons frequently and successfully drive some improvements in teaching, these are not yet sufficient for all groups.
- There have been some successes, for example the introduction of a new scheme for teaching mathematics. This is proving popular and showing some success, but not all teachers are using the scheme effectively for all pupils yet. New assessment procedures are also helping highlight pockets of slower progress. These are helping the well-established termly discussions between senior and middle leaders and teachers about pupils to become more detailed and effective. These are beginning to have an impact but are not yet being used sufficiently well to ensure that teaching is effective for all groups.
- Opportunities for learning are broad, balanced and often exciting and this contributes well to pupils' positive attitudes to their learning. Religious education, sport and music all have high priorities. There are some good links between different subjects which help pupils' understanding of life and enjoyment of learning as a whole. For example, literacy, art and history were linked well in one Year 4 lesson. Pupils successfully used reading and writing skills to research Ancient Egyptian gods, learned more about this historic culture and carefully studied and drew the different traditional deities.
- Primary sports funding is successfully being used in partnership with other schools. Collectively, these schools are extending the range of sports offered to pupils, providing more opportunities for competitive matches and providing training for school staff. Pupils are keen on sport and participate actively and enthusiastically. This has a positive impact on their health, fitness and well-being.
- School leaders and staff have not always found local authority officers supportive and have resisted their involvement. There have been difficulties in communication and the last local authority report on the school was written in January 2012. Leaders have now established contact with a new local authority advisor and are happy to have continued contact with him.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance requires improvement. Governors have not had enough recent training and have a limited understanding of their current roles and responsibilities. Their understanding of how well all groups of pupils in the school currently achieve and how effective teaching is for all groups is incomplete. They know how the school uses pupil premium funding, but less so how well this impacts on the progress of the eligible pupils. They manage finances adequately and have recruited a new governor with accountancy skills to strengthen this area of their work. They meet their statutory duties for safeguarding and are confident that all pupils are safe. They are fully involved in the performance management of the headteacher and know that systems to ensure financial rewards to teachers are closely linked to their performance and outcomes for pupils are in place.

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	100827
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	431309

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev. Nicholas Elder
Headteacher	Teresa Nouri
Date of previous school inspection	29 June 2009
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