

St George's Church of England Academy, Newtown

St George's Street, Birmingham, B19 3QY

Inspection dates

13–14 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good		2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good		2
Quality of teaching	Good		2
Achievement of pupils	Good		2
Early years provision	Outstanding		1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress from their low starting points and reach standards in line with those nationally in mathematics and well above average in reading.
- Teachers understand what pupils already know and use this to plan and set work which stretches pupils of all abilities.
- Teachers and support staff are skilled in questioning pupils to develop their understanding.
- Teachers' verbal feedback to pupils is good and helps them to understand how to improve their work.
- Subjects are taught through exciting topics which allow pupils to apply their skills in literacy and mathematics in a range of contexts.
- Excellent teaching and provision in the early years leads to outstanding progress for the children in their Reception Year.
- There is a great deal of harmony among pupils in the school. They are happy and respectful of each other in an atmosphere of fun and enthusiasm for learning.
- Pupils work hard and persevere with their activities. Their good behaviour and attitudes to learning support their progress well.
- Pupils feel safe in school and learn how to keep safe.
- Pupils, staff and parents express a very high level of satisfaction and confidence in the work of the school.
- The Principal has driven rapid improvement in teaching which has raised pupils' achievement.
- Governors use their good understanding of the school's strengths and areas to develop to set appropriate targets for improvement. They have undertaken a wide range of training in order to develop the skill to hold staff to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough pupils are attaining the higher standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are not yet making consistently good progress in writing and so standards in writing are well below average.
- Teachers' marking is not yet giving pupils in all classes enough guidance on how to improve their work, and teachers do not check that pupils act on the advice they are given.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 lessons jointly with the Principal and Vice Principal.
- Inspectors held meetings with the Principal, other academy leaders, academy staff, the governing body, a representative of the academy trust, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 16 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were insufficient responses to the parent questionnaire, Parent View, for these to be made available to inspectors.
- They looked at academy documents including the academy's own evaluation of its performance, the academy development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, staff appraisal systems, and those related to attendance and safety, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Lynne Bradbury, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Greevy

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St. George's CofE Primary School became an academy, sponsored by the Diocese of Birmingham Educational Trust, in March 2013 and is in soft a federation with St. John's Cof E Primary School, Spark Hill, Birmingham. When the predecessor school was inspected, it was judged to be satisfactory overall.
- The academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils come from a wide range of nationalities. The largest group, close to half the pupils, are of Black African heritage.
- Almost 60% of pupils speak English as an additional language. This is a well above average proportion.
- Around one in ten of the pupils are disabled or have special educational needs. This is below the national average.
- Close to 70% of pupils are disadvantaged and are eligible for support from the pupil premium funding because they are known to be eligible for free school meals or are looked after by the local authority. This is well above average.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for progress and attainment at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the work begun in the last year to improve achievement in writing for all pupils by:
 - extending the work currently being done in Key Stage 1 to improve sentence structure and pupils' vocabulary
 - ensuring that those pupils who speak English as an additional language, who join the academy in Key Stage 2, or who miss the work done to learn phonics (letters and sounds) in the early years, receive tuition which helps them to develop confidence and fluency in writing.
- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - when staff mark pupils' work, they all give pupils details about the specific skills to be improved
 - pupils act on the advice teachers give them when they mark their work
 - those pupils who are capable of attaining higher levels are identified at earlier stages and supported to reach higher standards.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal's drive for improvement is shared by staff and governors and this has led to improvement in pupils' progress. Leaders and governors rigorously monitor the school's work so that they understand the school's strengths and set priorities for development. They measure the success of their work against the progress made by pupils.
- Pupils at risk of falling behind are identified through the school's tracking systems. Leaders use a wide variety of extra teaching strategies to help them make better progress. For example, these pupils are given one-to-one support or are taught in small groups which focus in detail on the specific skills which they need to learn. This has been particularly successful in reading and mathematics, but not enough pupils are attaining the higher levels in writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1 and 2. This is because many pupils arrive in school at times other than the normal starting points with very little English. These pupils are given good support, particularly in learning English, but they take more time to catch up.
- While standards in writing are lower than those nationally, writing in books seen during the inspection showed that systems introduced by leaders to extend opportunities for independent writing have improved progress in writing this year across all year groups.
- In mathematics, leaders have ensured that basic skills are now applied through problem solving and investigations so that all pupils are stretched. For example, in Year 6, pupils were investigating percentage reductions to prices in popular stores on the internet to work out how to get the best value for money, with amounts which were tailored to the level of understanding of each ability group.
- Leaders and governors monitor teachers' work carefully against the results achieved by pupils. They use the appraisal system to ensure that priority areas for improvement are targeted in training for staff, and that the staff are then held accountable for the improvement or otherwise in pupils' achievement.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed through all subjects and is a key priority in all classes. Pupils are excited about learning and playing together, and show a high level of understanding and tolerance of the many different cultures represented in the school community. They show good respect for adults and each other.
- Exciting and vibrant topic work combines subjects across the curriculum. Pupils enjoy developing reading, writing and mathematics skills through subjects like history, geography and science, and they achieve high standards of performance in classes like African drumming.
- The good progress made by all groups of pupils demonstrates the school's commitment to equal opportunities. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are helped to make good progress, and those who are disadvantaged have made good progress because of the extra support funded by the pupil premium.
- Leaders have used the sports funding to employ sports coaches who deliver extra opportunities within lesson time and after school. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their extra opportunities in football, cricket, and dance, and staff have received training to develop their skills in teaching physical education and sport.
- Parents, pupils and staff are very happy with the improvements made in the academy. Parents, including those who speak little English, are very keen to join the many opportunities to work alongside their children in class and to come to classes which help with their own language development. They work with the school to address issues and problems which could become very serious within the community, like concerns in relation to radicalisation and female genital mutilation.
- The academy trust has supported the school to work in partnership with another local school in order to learn from best practice, check on the accuracy of teachers' assessments and improve teaching and learning.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors use their professional skills so that they can judge the academy's work for themselves. They undertake a wide range of training which has enabled them to establish rigorous systems for checking staff performance and holding them to account for pupils' achievement, including through the decisions they make about career development and pay rises. Governors measure their success in terms of pupils' progress, and identify appropriate areas for their own development and to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Funding for improvement plans is carefully monitored. Governors check that extra funding, such as the additional school sports funding, brings valuable extra opportunities for pupils, and ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress through the use of the pupil premium.
- The governing body ensures that safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their positive attitudes to their learning contribute to their good progress and they take good care with their work and presentation.
- Happy relationships ensure a great deal of harmony between the many different groups of pupils and adults in the academy. They work and play together sensibly and with respect and care for each other.
- No disruptions to lessons were seen during the inspection, and the academy's records and talks with pupils confirm that this is how school normally is.
- Teachers use praise and rewards well to encourage pupils' positive attitudes and to help them feel proud of their achievements.
- Pupils are polite and responsible as they move around the school and they show a high level of pride in the learning environment.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the range of subjects and topics they are taught, and the clubs outside lesson time.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are developed well through all aspects of academy life. Lots of opportunities for reflection about right and wrong, working together and understanding people of other faiths and backgrounds help pupils to develop tolerance, respect and friendships across a wide range of groups. Pupils are excited and fascinated about the world.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safeguarding procedures, including appropriate checks on visitors, meet statutory requirements. Policies are followed by all staff and monitored by governors.
- Pupils feel safe at school because they say that adults take good care of them. They understand how to keep themselves safe, and understand the different forms that bullying can take, including those which involve mobile phones and the internet. They say that bullying is rare but is dealt with very quickly by staff if it occurs.
- There are many opportunities within their classes for pupils to consider the risks from being near roads, railways or water, and they understand how to keep themselves safe. They also understand how to avoid risks when using the internet.
- Pupils say that staff check that pupils do not use derogatory language or say negative things about groups of people who are different in some way. Racist incidents are rare.

- Attendance is above average.

The quality of teaching is good

- Staff understand what their pupils can already do and plan work to stretch pupils of all abilities, which helps them to make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language take a while to catch up, however. While they reach high levels in reading, they do not always do as well in mathematics and writing. Children make outstanding progress in the Reception class because they benefit from much one-to-one tuition and the opportunity to work in small groups.
- The school tracking system is used by staff to check the progress made by all pupils and to identify any pupils who fall behind so that they can be given appropriate extra support. It is not being used sufficiently to identify those more-able pupils who have the ability to make more progress than is currently the case in writing and mathematics.
- Staff ask probing questions during lessons so that they can assess pupils' learning and change the level of support or challenge to move them on even further.
- Homework extends the opportunities for pupils to practise their reading, spelling and number skills. Pupils are enthusiastic about extending their learning outside lesson time, particularly in the work they do on topics like diary entries about their hobbies and holidays and recounts of the Great Fire of London.
- Staff manage behaviour well using the rewards system which pupils greatly enjoy. Staff help pupils to take pride in their achievement and behaviour.
- The academy's policy on marking pupils' work is at an early stage in its introduction, and marking to identify for pupils the areas for improvement are not yet well developed in all classes. All teachers show what has been achieved in pupils' work, but not all teachers give enough detailed guidance to help pupils to know how to improve their work. Teachers do not make sure that pupils act on the advice they are given through marking in writing and mathematics.
- Staff have very high expectations of all pupils and they model behaviour and attitudes well. Pupils enjoy the fun and happy relationships established by staff, and this encourages them to work hard and do their best.
- Skills in reading, writing and mathematics are developed through exciting topics which combine many different subjects.
- Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' achievement. They are well trained and support pupils who struggle to speak English, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They lead the teaching of small groups of pupils and contribute to the care for all pupils.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Reception class with knowledge and skills which are generally well below those typical for their age. They make good, and sometimes outstanding progress. In 2014, they reached standards in line with those nationally in mathematics and well above average in reading by the end of Year 6. Standards in writing were well below average. In the early years, pupils made outstanding progress.
- Pupils develop their skills in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) and spelling from the earliest stages in school. In 2014, Year 1 pupils achieved levels above those nationally in the Year 1 phonics check.
- Proportions of pupils who attained expected standards were in line with average in Year 2 in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. This was also the picture of attainment at the end of Year 6. However, high proportions of pupils in Year 6 achieved above the expected standard in reading. In both

key stages, few pupils attained the higher levels in mathematics and writing.

- Across other year groups in the academy, progress is becoming more rapid for all ability groups and more pupils are attaining higher levels because of the effective use of extra support.
- Workbooks, school tracking data and the lessons observed during the inspection showed that pupils are currently making more rapid progress than was evident from the 2014 national tests. Their progress is particularly strong where their key skills are developed through topic work.
- Pupils in Year 1 retold the story of Red Riding Hood developing punctuation, including speech marks for the more able, and exciting descriptions including similes. Older pupils, studying the rainforest, wrote letters to high-ranking government officials to persuade them to consider the importance of the environment. They developed complex sentences and vocabulary which was appropriate to the subject.
- Workbooks and lessons also show that more-able pupils are being challenged at an appropriate level and developing skills at higher levels than the results in 2014 show in writing and mathematics. Pupils are encouraged to analyse their reading and to emulate the features of sentence structure and description in their own writing. In mathematics, they collect statistics about features of the natural world and use them to explore mathematical problems.
- Pupils enjoy reading, understand what they read, and talk with great enthusiasm about authors and their books. They know how to use information books to find out about different subjects. This was evident in their reading about insulators and conductors in science, and the Great Fire of London in history.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because accurate assessment of their skills ensures that extra support and work in lessons successfully address their specific learning needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils who received support from the pupil premium in Year 6 in 2014 were three and a half terms behind their peers in school in mathematics, broadly in line with their peers in reading, about half a term behind in writing, and nearly two terms behind in grammar, punctuation and spelling. These pupils were two terms behind pupils nationally in mathematics, one and a half terms behind in reading, three terms behind in writing, and one and a half terms behind in grammar, spelling and punctuation. In all year groups, these pupils are now making progress at least in line with and sometimes at higher rates than their peers in school.
- While all pupils, including the most able, are stretched in lessons and make good progress, those who join the academy during Key Stage 2 speaking English as an additional language have missed out on the extra tuition in early years and Key Stage 1 which help pupils to develop sentence structure, vocabulary, confidence and fluency in their writing, and which they need in order to achieve the higher levels in reading and mathematics.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge which are generally well below those typical for their age. Staff have a very clear understanding of children's knowledge and skills, and they plan exciting learning activities which stretch children of all abilities across all areas of the curriculum. Children make outstanding progress and move into Year 1 with skills which are above those typical for their age.
- The learning environment is vibrant and exciting. Activities indoors and outside give the opportunity for children to explore stories from their reading by acting out characters, exploring phonics through art and craft materials, and building structures like Red Riding Hood's house. Children display great enjoyment in their work, learn to respect each other and behave exceptionally well. This helps them to learn.
- A significant proportion of children speak very little English when they start school. The small-group and one-to-one tuition they receive help children to make very rapid progress so that they become confident in basic language and mathematics skills and can apply these in many contexts by the time they reach Year

1.

- Staff use their links with the local nursery to make sure that children are well prepared for school. Parents are greeted as key partners in the learning process and work alongside their children in many activities.
- Leadership in the early years is outstanding and makes an exceptional contribution to children's achievement. Leaders monitor the work of the early years carefully and make sure that staff are well trained so that they can provide very effective support in any areas where children struggle to make progress.

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	139126
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	447850

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Larry Wright
Principal	Paul Doddridge
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	0121 3593432
Fax number	0121 359 0559
Email address	enquiry@stgnewtown.bham.sch.uk

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