

St George's CofE Primary School

St George's Lane North, Worcester, WR1 1RD

Inspection dates 10–11 December 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| | 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 | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, supported by other leaders and the governing body, has acted swiftly to address areas of comparative weakness. As a result, teaching and achievement across the school are now consistently good.
- Although many children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with very limited skills in communicating in English, all make good progress and leave ready for Year 1.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave consistently well in lessons and outside, and take pride in their work. Their positive attitudes help them to learn.
- The school keeps its pupils safe: bullying is very rare, and pupils are entirely confident that staff will promptly resolve any problems.
- Teaching is good across the school, but strongest at Key Stage 2. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are well promoted in a wide variety of lessons. Marking identifies clearly what pupils need to do to improve.
- The school tracks pupils' progress carefully, and well-trained staff help those at risk of falling behind to catch up. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social values strongly, including respect for people from all cultural backgrounds.
- The provision for science is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils are not always challenged enough to think for themselves and deepen their understanding.
- The deployment of classroom support staff does not always have a strong impact on pupils' progress.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to write enough and fully develop their ideas.
- The teaching of phonics (sounds and corresponding letters) is not consistently good.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 15 lessons; three of these were seen jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also observed pupils' conduct at break and lunchtime.
- As part of a pilot study, science was inspected by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, other leaders, class teachers, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils selected at random. They spoke with many others informally, particularly in class. Inspectors listened to pupils reading, and discussed their reading experiences.
- Pupils' work was examined in lessons and on displays. Inspectors also closely analysed pupils' work in their books.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents. These included: development plans and their evaluations; a local authority report on the school; records of how leaders check on teaching; minutes of meetings of the governing body; case studies of individual pupils; policies; safeguarding records; records of pupils' progress and the local authority's confirmation of its findings on pupils' progress; and school website, publicity and newsletters.
- Inspectors took into account the 26 responses to the online, Parent View, questionnaire, and the school's own records of parental surveys. They also considered the 18 responses to the questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Martin Spoor, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Deborah Campbell | Additional Inspector |
| Brian Cartwright | Her Majesty's Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school, with one class in each year group.
- Children are taught in the Reception class on a full-time basis.
- Nearly two thirds of pupils are of White British heritage, and one in six is of Pakistani heritage. A third of pupils speak English as an additional language, and several enter the school at an early stage of learning English.
- Just over a quarter of pupils are disabled or have special educational needs. This proportion is above average.
- Just under a quarter of pupils receive support from the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in care. This proportion is in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2014. Some staff have been unavoidably absent.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make teaching consistently outstanding by:
 - challenging pupils to be curious, think harder and deepen their understanding in lessons so they achieve more
 - deploying teaching assistants so they have the greatest impact possible on the learning of all pupils.
- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining the top levels in writing by giving them further opportunities to express their own ideas in their writing and write more to reinforce and advance their literacy skills.
- Accelerate progress in reading in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 by ensuring that the school's approach to the teaching of phonics is followed consistently and has the impact intended.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher joined a school in which most pupils were achieving well, but promptly identified areas of comparative weakness. Working with other leaders, she has already improved marking, and increased the rigour with which underperformance is identified and tackled. She has established clear expectations for staff, while encouraging them to develop their individual strengths. With the assistance of the local authority, leaders are managing skilfully the impact of unavoidable staff absence. As a result, pupils' progress is consistently good across the school.
- Subject leaders look at books to check how well pupils are learning, and use their specialist knowledge to advise colleagues in their planning of learning. As a result, learning is sharply focused and pupils' progress is accelerating.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and reflects a school expectation of responsible behaviour from every pupil and good teaching from all staff. The school's development plan is a secure basis for taking improvement forward. It is comprehensive and well focused on the right priorities. Although there are few specific criteria yet applied to help leaders check on progress, achievement and teaching priorities are central and show improvement
- Leaders set precise targets for staff, and evaluate teachers' performance accurately. They use the results to make decisions about pay rises and promotion. Staff, including teachers at an early stage of their careers, report that staff development is focused and relevant to their needs, and specialist training is readily available. Inspection findings endorsed these positive staff views. The impact of the effective leadership of teaching is pupils' good achievement.
- The school's curriculum is broad and enables pupils to achieve well in all subjects, including mathematics, science, and literacy. Trips and activities engage pupils' enthusiasm and help to make learning a practical reality for them. Inspectors witnessed how 18 months experience of learning a brass instrument enabled Year 5 pupils to read music and be eager to improve their skills. After-school clubs provide further opportunities. For example, gardening club enables pupils to extend their learning about living things in science lessons.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This is reflected in excellent relationships among pupils, and between pupils and adults. The school's ethos ensures that pupils learn to respect different religions and cultures – including Islam. Pupils learn about the British tradition of democracy and the importance of participation in decision making, including through the direct experience of electing members to the school council and its activities. Pupils are well prepared, both socially and academically, for secondary school and for life in modern Britain.
- Primary sports funding is spent effectively to extend pupils' learning opportunities. Pupils' progress in swimming has accelerated through the employment of a specialist coach and training for staff. Pupils very much enjoy competing with other local schools, and two thirds take a regular part in after-school sport. As a result, they have gained in physical fitness and well-being.
- Funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used effectively on strategies to help pupils catch up, and fully involve them in the wider life of the school. The impact of the spending is checked thoroughly by leaders and the results used to refine expenditure for the following year.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. Staff gain the cooperation of other agencies to help vulnerable pupils.
- Leaders combat discrimination by ensuring that pupils are all treated and treat each other with unflinching respect. All leaders work intensively to support pupils who are not fully engaged with school or who are at risk of falling behind to ensure all have opportunity to achieve well.
- Although the school is in the early stages of working towards the implementation of its preferred approach

to assessment following the removal of National Curriculum levels, work seen by inspectors was graded accurately. The levels awarded at the end of each key stage are confirmed by the local authority. Leaders regularly moderate in-year assessments in partnership with another local school to ensure their accuracy.

- Leaders are involving parents more frequently in the learning of their children, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1. A very small number of parents expressed concerns about communication with the school when a leader was absent.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governors are working with the headteacher to maintain the shared vision for the school as a place where pupils' personal qualities are fostered alongside their academic progress. They are ensuring its efficient day-to-day management, for example, reviewing and updating policies promptly.
- They know what the quality of teaching is and how well pupils achieve. They understand the data on pupils' progress and attainment and how performance compares with other schools nationally. As a result, the governors effectively oversee all school activities and hold senior leaders to account for its performance.
- Governors actively promote social cohesion, for example, by maintaining its own traditions while ensuring that it celebrates other faiths and cultures. They are actively seeking representation among the governing body from minority ethnic communities.
- Governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities, including those for safeguarding. They manage the pay and performance of the headteacher and other staff effectively. They know how the performance of staff is managed and make sure that pay increases take into account teachers' performance in enabling pupils to make good progress.
- They ensure the school stays within its budget, and that expenditure prioritises areas for improvement. Governors make sure that they are fully trained for their roles.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. It is supported effectively from the Early Years Foundation Stage onwards and the close attention given to children's personal, social and emotional development. Classroom routines are well established, and all pupils know the consequences of any lapses in behaviour. Relationships between adults and pupils are very strong, and pupils talked animatedly with inspectors about their teachers' skills.
- In lessons, pupils share equipment, collaborate well together, and respect each other's oral contributions, even if these are sometimes hesitant. When requested, they settle immediately to the task in hand. They take a pride in their work and present it neatly.
- During social times, pupils play together happily with low-key supervision. Their playground is well organised and equipped to promote imaginative, safe play. Older pupils act as playground monitors, responsibly distributing balls, skipping ropes and other play equipment. All pupils display good manners in the dining hall, and inspectors witnessed pupils readily helping one who accidentally dropped cutlery. There is no litter, and pupils entirely respect their school environment.
- The school accurately records pupils' behaviour and logs any major incidents carefully. There is a strong emphasis on positive behaviour, which receives rewards tailored to the different ages of pupils in the school. There have been very few incidents of a racist nature, and the school has taken them seriously and handled them sensitively. The school has not used exclusion as a sanction since the last inspection.
- Just occasionally, pupils' interest wanes, and they become a little distracted.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they always feel safe in school, and all the parents who expressed a view agree. Inspectors found that the school premises are well

maintained, and pupils are able to play safely on a secure site. The school checks all staff rigorously prior to appointment. Some pupils say that bullying occurs on rare occasions, but that pupils know who to turn to for support and issues are quickly resolved. They recall one example of racism, which was swiftly settled.

- Older and younger pupils know how to protect themselves from different sorts of risk, including those from the internet and related to road safety. Risk assessments are always rigorously conducted for school trips.
- The school has worked effectively with other agencies to protect vulnerable pupils. This has included investigating the risks posed outside the school to pupils from a minority ethnic community, and making appropriate referrals.
- The school has succeeded in improving attendance. It was broadly average last year. A small number of families who previously took extended foreign trips during term time no longer do so.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good across all year groups, including the Early Years Foundation Stage. The best teaching was seen in Key Stage 2. From the scrutiny of pupils' books, it was clear that, over time, teaching secures their good learning and achievement in reading, mathematics, science and other subjects.
- Pupils are helped to become competent writers, but are not always challenged to develop their skills as well as in other subjects. For example, the most able sometimes lack the freedom to express their ideas to plan, structure and paragraph their writing and reach the higher levels.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils' participation in learning, and their energy guarantees an enthusiastic response. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, and they insist that pupils from the youngest age onwards use the correct subject-specific terms. In science, teachers provide an appropriate balance between practical work and research. Homework makes a good contribution to learning.
- Teachers usually explain challenging ideas carefully and in the right order, checking pupils' understanding at regular intervals. This enables, for example, less-able pupils in Year 4 to take great strides in their understanding of fractions, and pupils in Year 5 to develop the skills to alter images on a computer.
- Work generally builds well on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding and is usually challenging for all. Teachers know pupils' academic strengths and weaknesses very well. However, although teachers check on pupils' learning, they do not always challenge them to explain and show their understanding of the topic. Consequently, pupils' understanding is not always fully tested and their intellectual curiosity is not fully stimulated.
- The learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is enhanced by daily records of their progress, which enable staff to identify precisely what their next steps in learning should be.
- In all subjects, teachers are effective at improving key skills, for example by ensuring that calculations are set out properly and recording how experiments test out scientific ideas. Work is well marked, with clear indications of how pupils can improve it. This encourages them to reflect carefully on their own progress, and often to respond to teachers' comments in detail.
- The teaching of phonics is not consistently good. For example, during the inspection, a few children were seen not to understand some activities which were too hard for them, and some staff did not ensure that skills were acquired consistently by all the pupils in the group. With older pupils, reading is promoted very well, and pupils spoke of the library with great enthusiasm.
- Inspectors often observed teaching assistants working skilfully with individuals or small groups of pupils,

asking pertinent questions and providing ways to enable them to grasp ideas. At other times, assistants made less direct contribution to pupils' learning in lessons.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school. There is considerable variation in the abilities of different year groups, but attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is generally broadly average. Instability in staffing adversely affected attainment in Key Stage 1 in 2014, but in Key Stage 2 attainment rose and was above average in reading.
- In 2014, pupils in Key Stage 2 made at least the progress expected nationally in all subjects. They made more rapid progress in reading and mathematics than is expected nationally, but were behind that strong performance in writing.
- Information presented by the school, confirmed by inspectors' extensive scrutiny of work, shows that the large majority of pupils in all year groups are making good progress. The situation reflects the headteacher's high expectations for what pupils can achieve.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group is small and the situation leads to variation in results year on year. In 2014, some Year 6 pupils transferred late into the school so they had less time to benefit from the support available. Disadvantaged pupils ended Year 6 approximately three terms behind other pupils nationally in writing and mathematics. In reading, they were one and a half terms ahead of national results. They left Year 6 with their reading one term ahead of that of their peers in the school, but two terms behind in writing and four and a half in mathematics.
- At Key Stage 1, disadvantaged pupils attain in line with their peers in school. Reliable tracking data provided by the school indicate that, due to more effective use of the pupil premium funding, the progress of all disadvantaged pupils is accelerating and they are catching up in all subjects with other pupils nationally.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs increased significantly in 2014, especially in reading. This reflects the care with which their learning is tracked and work provided to support their progress.
- The most-able pupils make particularly good progress in mathematics. The proportion in Key Stage 2 pupils attaining the higher Level 5 and above was ahead of national results in reading and mathematics in 2014, but less strong in writing. In Key Stage 1, the most able do not attain as well as in Key Stage 2 because some have not developed their skills and confidence having started school with limited practice in using English.
- Writing, especially of the most able, is not as strong as their other subjects. When inspectors looked at pupils' books, they found that considerable attention was given to spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary, but pupils did not generally write enough to reinforce their written skills.
- The progress and attainment of pupils of Pakistani heritage is similar to that of their peers. The progress of pupils for whom English is an additional language is slightly less strong than that of similar pupils nationally, but rose significantly in 2014. Some minority ethnic pupils need time once they have joined the school to enhance their skills and confidence in using English. They gain these skills well and achieve in line with other pupils by Key Stage 2.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check was below nationally expected results in 2013 and 2014. The school has acted to provide further training and increase the effective teaching of phonics. The school's expectation, supported by evidence of pupils' reading heard by inspectors, is that the majority of Year 2 pupils have advanced their reading skills and are well prepared for the second check. Reading in the later years is very successful and pupils achieve well with it in Key Stage 2.

The early years provision is good

- Children enter the Reception class with broadly typical skills and experience for their age. However, they are behind most children particularly in communication and language, and some also have weak personal, social and emotional development.
- Some who are of minority ethnic heritage have particular difficulties in using English. The school's assessment of children on entry and in the Early Years Foundation Stage was recently checked by the local authority and found to be accurate. Inspectors observed at first hand that children matched the judgments made about them.
- Children make good progress from their starting points in the Reception class, especially in personal, social and emotional development, and begin to catch up where their skills are behind those of others. This increases their readiness and enthusiasm to learn in Year 1 – a situation witnessed by inspectors.
- Mainly because the limited language skills of some children on entry, in 2014 the proportion attaining a good level of development was below the national average. Nevertheless, those who start with limited English make good progress and follow all learning activities with others.
- Teaching is good. Staff know the children very well, and have high expectations. Learning is well organised, and transitions from one activity to the next run smoothly so that time is not wasted. Provision is made for different groups of children, although, occasionally, children of higher ability are not always challenged to progress as rapidly as they can.
- Regular reminders ensure that children behave well, including those whose language and social skills are not well developed. Teachers actively promote the skills of sharing, listening and discussion, and inspectors witnessed children making a present and discussing who should receive it. The classroom is a safe and secure environment.
- Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders have a good understanding of the effectiveness of the early years provision, and have supported it well during a period of staffing turbulence.
- Children enter the Reception class from a number of private nurseries and directly from homes. Leaders work successfully with parents and nursery staff to ensure that children are integrated as quickly as possible. Assessment of children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage takes the views of parents into account. Particular care is taken to build good relationships with parents of children for whom English is an additional language, some of whom are not confident English speakers themselves. The school provides letters in various languages for parents and translation services at parents' evenings.

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

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| Unique reference number | 116923 |
| Local authority | Worcestershire |
| Inspection number | 449239 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 205 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Matthew Bunn |
| Headteacher | Louise Norris |
| Date of previous school inspection | 5 July 2011 |
| Telephone number | 01905 619454 |
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